

Local History Bulletin

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St. James' Church, Suffolk Square, Cheltenham, designed by Edward Jenkins.
A lithograph by George Rowe, circa. 1840 (Cheltenham Public Library).

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EDITORIAL

Our subscribers have, with this *Bulletin*, received their first copy of our new venture the "Newsletter".

Dr. Steven Blake has done a tremendous amount of work to launch our first edition, and it is to help and advise the local historian — so please let us have your comments.

Hopefully you will receive this *Bulletin* prior to the annual Local History Conference, so just a reminder that it is on Saturday, 20th September, 2—5 p.m. at the College of Education, Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester. The theme will be "Communications in Gloucestershire History". Speakers will include Messrs. David Bick, Hugh Conway-Jones and Alan Picken.

Also, will you please remember the "Oral History Workshop" on Saturday, 18th October, 2—5 p.m. at the County Record Office, Worcester Street, Gloucester.

Unfortunately there was an error on the cover of the Spring issue. It read Spring, 1980 — No. 39. It should have been, of course, No. 41. Apologies from our Printer.

G. J. STOCKHAM, Editor.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AT MINCHINHAMPTON (1576—1700)

COMMENTING ON THE sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Laslett observed that "the question of starvation among the English is an intricate, if undecided, question."⁽¹⁾ Goubert, studying the Beauvaisis, France, found that poor harvests and trade depressions in the seventeenth century produced a large increase in the number of deaths and falling marriage and conception rates⁽²⁾. As Laslett noted, our knowledge of the situation in England during the same period is unclear and the aim of this study is to throw some light on the situation in a Gloucestershire parish.

Minchinhampton is situated on the western edge of the Cotswolds, forming part of the Stroudwater area. The three props of the parish's economy were farming, the market and, most important, the cloth industry. There were large numbers of paupers judging by the Hearth Tax Returns of 1672 in which nearly half of the householders were exempted because of poverty⁽³⁾.

An analysis of the burials in the Parish Register⁽⁴⁾ should provide a chronicle of 'good' and 'sickly' years and make it possible to obtain a good picture of the effects of economic hardship on the death-rate. One might expect that, because of the presence of a large number of poor weavers solely dependent for their livelihoods on the cloth industry, a depression in that industry would lead to a rise in the number of deaths and a loss of confidence, perhaps resulting in a fall in the number of marriages.

The intention is to analyse the Parish Register of Burials, Marriages and Baptisms and to study those years in which the death-rate was abnormally high, and then to try to ascertain whether this high mortality co-incident with sickness, a trade depression or a poor harvest. If a poor harvest is suspected, the situation is best understood if the data is fitted into a harvest year (i.e. 1st August—31st July). The first of these abnormal years was 1597. Then, in the early seventeenth century there was a series of bad years in 1607/8, 1616, 1622/3 and 1637, while others such as 1632 and 1640 appear suspicious. During the Civil War and the Interregnum the Register is defective and no references are made to those years in this study. In the latter part of the century abnormal years were fewer, but pronounced peaks occurred in 1675, 1684/7 and 1796/8.

The first year of very high mortality, 1597, came at the end of a series of very bad harvests. Hoskins reckoned that the price of wheat was 80% above the norm and in 1597 the harvest was only slightly better(5). Well over half of burials in 1597 occurred in the four summer months from June to September, which was the reverse of the normal situation. The deaths do not seem to have been caused directly by starvation because they do not co-incide with the harvest year. The reason for these deaths could be sicknesses, such as dysentery, which were prevalent in southern England in 1596/6(6). Of course, lack of food would have contributed by lowering resistance to disease.

This period of poor harvests and sickness had a marked effect on the parish. Marriages were postponed and the number of baptisms fell. 91 burials were recorded in the Register. As there were 600 communicants in 1603, or a total population of about 1,000, this means that approximately 9% of the inhabitants were killed.

Burials recorded in Minchinhampton Register, 1576-1605

(The number of burials is shown in brackets after the year).

1576 (7), 1577 (12), 1578 (16), 1579 (15), 1580 (9), 1581 (6), 1582 (12), 1583 (9), 1584 (17), 1585 (5), 1586 (15), 1587 (15), 1588 (25), 1589 (14), 1590 (27), 1591 (28), 1592 (21), 1593 (25), 1594 (15), 1595 (12), 1596 (8), 1597 (91), 1598 (28), 1599 (15), 1600 (25), 1601 (16), 1602 (13), 1603 (19), 1604 (19), 1605 (20).

The next period of unusually high mortality occurred in 1607 and 1608, and especially the harvest year 1607/8. 35 burials took place in the harvest year, about double the normal figure. Hoskins described the harvest of 1607 in the West Country as 'bad', and there is literary evidence for poor harvests in this period(7) because Woodwall, the minister in nearby Stroud, had a sermon published "wherein are chiefly shew both the originall and accidentall causes of everie dearth and famine and especially of this dearth in England now 1608 and 1609." There was no repetition of the disaster of 1597, however. The number of burials was far less. The marriage rate did not change.

The abnormally high mortality of 1616, however, does not seem to have been caused by a poor harvest, because the deaths do not co-incide with the harvest year and moreover Hoskins states that the year came during a period of 'average' harvests. The cause was probably a depression in the cloth industry, connected with the Cockayne experiment, and in July, 1616, a petition was sent from Stroudwater complaining that the Merchant Adventurers, who formerly bought cloth weekly, no longer did so, with the resulting poverty of many people(8).

The worst year for mortalities in the early seventeenth century was the harvest year 1622/3, when 45 burials occurred. The deaths co-incide well with the harvest year, and Hoskins found that the harvest of 1622 was 'bad', although it was by no means the worst in this period, the price of wheat being only 26% above the norm. What impoverished many of the inhabitants and helped to push up the death-rate was another crisis in the cloth industry. In May, 1622, a letter was sent by J.P.s from Minchinhampton stating that the authorities "through want of money and means in these late tymes growne poore, was unable to releve the infinite number of poore people resideing within the same (drawne hither by means of clothing)." (9).

Burials, 1606-1635

1606 (18), 1607 (25), 1608 (30), 1609 (13), 1610 (17), 1611 (22), 1612 (21), 1613 (11), 1614 (8), 1615 (21), 1616 (34), 1617 (15), 1618 (15), 1619 (19), 1620 (20), 1621 (29), 1622 (37), 1623 (36), 1624 (19), 1625 (22), 1626 (23), 1627 (28), 1628 (21), 1629 (22), 1630 (21), 1631 (22), 1632 (37), 1633 (30), 1634 (21), 1635 (24),

The high mortality of 1675 does not co-incide with the harvest year and according to Hoskins, the harvest of 1675, which would have applied during the period of most deaths, was normal. There were signs that the cloth industry was experiencing hardships about this time and complaints were received in London from Wiltshire clothiers and English Cloth-workers. There was, however, no petition from Stroudwater (10).

In the mid-1680's, there was a series of years with an abnormal number of deaths. 56 occurred in 1684, 55 in 1686 and 53 in 1687. These figures were not wildly extraordinary, but the fact that they were high for such a time is grounds for suspicion. The deaths do not co-incide with harvest years and Hoskins sites this as a period of 'good' harvests. The probable cause was another recession in the cloth industry. On March 26th, 1686, a petition was despatched to London from Gloucestershire clothiers, stating that the decay of trade in the county was so considerable that many were not able to subsist, nearly a fifth of the value of some parishes being expended on the relief of the poor. It particularly mentioned that coloured cloth, a speciality of Stroudwater, was hard hit by the loss of trade with Turkey (11).

The final year of high mortality in the seventeenth century co-incided with the harvest year 1697/8. Hoskins records this as a year of death coming after a series of poor harvests. Creighton discovered that 1693-8 was a period of 'seven ill years' with sporadic outbreaks of influenza, spotted fever and agues. These were probably made more virulent by the shortage of food (12).

Burials, 1636-1700

1636 (23), 1637 (42), 1638 (25), 1639 (19), 1640 (40),
1661 (31), 1662 (42), 1663 (43), 1664 (42), 1665 (27), 1666 (34), 1667 (48), 1668 (38), 1669 (30), 1670 (31), 1671 (49), 1672 (28), 1673 (36), 1674 (49), 1675 (63), 1676 (30), 1678 (32), 1679 (33), 1680 (32), 1681 (41), 1682 (43), 1683 (40), 1684 (56), 1685 (36), 1686 (55), 1687 (53), 1688 (33), 1689 (47), 1690 (50), 1691 (35), 1692 (47), 1693 (37), 1694 (49), 1695 (41), 1696 (32), 1697 (50), 1698 (58), 1699 (34), 1700 (46).

In conclusion, therefore, it is possible to make three general points concerning the demographic history of Minchinhampton in this period. Firstly, it is rarely possible to attribute an abnormal number of deaths to a single cause. For instance, those of 1597 co-occurred with a period of sickness and a shortage of food and those of 1622/3 occurred during a trade depression and after a poor harvest.

Secondly, subsistence crises, as found by Goubert in France, were unknown in seventeenth-century Minchinhampton. The only occasion when anything remotely similar occurred was in 1597.

Thirdly, the situation improved markedly as the century progressed. Nothing as serious as the disaster of 1597 ever recurred and after the Restoration the peaks of abnormal mortality became more subdued, which perhaps reflected the increasing well-being of the inhabitants.

REFERENCES:

- (1) P. Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, p. 115.
- (2) P. Goubert, *Beauvais et le Beauvaisis de 1600 a 1700*.
- (3) Gloucester County Record Office, D383.
- (4) Gloucester County Record Office, P217 IN 1/4 and 1/5.
- (5) W. G. Hoskins, 'Harvest Fluctuations, part 2', *Ag. H.R.*, XIV, 1964, p. 46.
- (6) C. Creighton, *History of epidemics in Britain, vol I*, p. 411-2.
- (7) Sermon in Gloucester City Library, p. 17.
- (8) Calendar of State Papers Domestic, 1616, p. 389.
- (9) R. H. Cluttbuck, 'State Papers Relating to the Cloth Trade', *T.B.G.A.S.*, V, 1932, p. 154.
- (10) C.S.P.D., 1674, p. 315, and C.S.P.D., 1674, p. 454.
- (11) C.S.P.D., 1686, p. 346.
- (12) Creighton, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 45.

T. M. NEILL.

THE FRANCIS CLOSE HALL

THE RENAMING OF the St. Paul's College buildings as the 'Francis Close Hall' is a fitting tribute to the leading Evangelical Anglican educationalist of the nineteenth century. Francis Close (1797-1882) was for thirty years incumbent of Cheltenham parish church 1826-56, and then dean of Carlisle 1856-81. He was converted to faith in Christ in 1813, and was much influenced by Rev. Charles Simeon of Cambridge between 1817-20, when Close was a student at St. John's College. Close made Simeon's principles his own and these were worked out in practical terms in Cheltenham.

Close had been actively engaged in education since 1820, when he was a curate in Warwickshire. He gained further experience in Middlesex, and then whilst he was the minister of Holy Trinity, Cheltenham 1824-26. Shortly before being appointed by Simeon to Cheltenham parish church, Close was involved in the formation of an infant school in the then hamlet of Alstone in the spring

of 1826. This was followed two years later by an infant school in St. James' Square. This purpose-built school-room, opened on 26th July 1830, is of considerable national importance since it is one of the few buildings of its type still standing. As the town developed, other infant schools were established in union with the Central Infant School in St. James' Square. By 1845, nearly four hundred teachers had been trained at the Central Infant School, the National schools in Bath Road (1816) and Holy Trinity National School (1835).

When in the summer of 1845 the Evangelical merchant and philanthropist Samuel Codner (1776-1858) had the vision of establishing a 'normal school' for the training of Evangelical teachers for schools at home and overseas, he believed that Cheltenham was the best place for it. Already, the town had two advantages in its favour. It had an established system of teacher-training, and, more significantly, it had Francis Close as incumbent. With Close behind the scheme, his Evangelical principles would be at the heart of the course of training teachers. One of the annual reports made it clear that the 'College was founded in order to maintain the distinctive Evangelical principles of the Church of England . . . a permanent bulwark of the reformation principles of the Church of England.' This sentiment was also enshrined in a clause in the Trust Deed, 'The object of the institution is to instruct pious persons as masters or mistresses for any part of the United Kingdom, upon scriptural, Evangelical and protestant principles, in conformity with the Articles and Liturgy of the Church of England, as now by law established'. Similar words were cut in the foundation stone in the front porch and laid by Lord Ashley on 19th April, 1849. Plans to establish the training school at Cheltenham were shelved in the autumn of 1845, when it was proposed to transfer it to London. But at that stage there was no support from the London Evangelicals. (They had changed their minds by 1850, when they established at Highbury the short-lived sister college the 'Church of England Metropolitan Training Institution' 1850-64). The matter was referred back to Close, and the Cheltenham scheme resumed in January 1847. Close, as chairman, received active support from the government, but considerable opposition from the Tractarians who accused him of establishing what they contemptuously called 'a schismatical institution', 'Mr Close's Schools'. But he made it clear that the college was to serve the whole country and the colonies, and not confined to the town or diocese — hence the full title — 'The Church of England Training School Association, at Cheltenham'. Between 1847-50 Close acted almost single-handed as its promoter and fund-raiser, and travelled to places as far apart as Edinburgh, Glasgow, Weston-super-Mare and Brighton. By Christmas 1849, over £19,000.0.0. had been collected.

From the first, the training school had two departments. The men's department, opened with five students on 2nd June 1847 in St. Julia's Cottage, Oxford Passage. This house, together with an adjoining property was used until the purpose-built college was opened in 1850. At first there were fewer applications for admission from women, and the women's department was a drain on resources. Until St. Mary's Hall (Shaftesbury Hall) was opened in 1869, the women's department was housed first at Monson Villa 1847-49, and then for twenty years in the premises in the High Street vacated by the General Hospital (Idmiston House). The earliest plans of the building sub-committee were to erect a college of sixty pupils on a site in Wellington Square, but this was dropped

in favour of land given by the wealthy Cheltenham resident, Miss Jane Cook (1775-1851). Her generosity in giving the site, and £500.0.0 was recorded in a memorial stone in the front porch. The Cheltenham architect, Samuel Whitfield Daukes (1811-1880) was invited to prepare plans for a training school for eighty men at a cost of no more than £8,000.0.0. The design in 'domestic middle pointed of the fourteenth century' was of an open quadrangle surrounded on all four sides by buildings. It consisted of dormitory accommodation for eighty men (102 after modifications) on the first floor, and lecture room, class-rooms, dining hall, sick bay and day room, together with residences for the principal, vice-principal and model master on the ground floor. Estimates for the work were obtained, and the lowest by Thomas Haines of Cheltenham for £9,480.0.0. was accepted. The total cost of the buildings, including Daukes fees of £512.10.0., and fittings was £11,761.0.0., of which £4,000.0.0. was obtained from a government grant.

From the first, the practical training of the teachers was an important part of the course. From 1847, the St. Paul's National School was adopted as the model and practising school, since it was near to the two departments, and under the supervision of Rev. Charles Henry Bromby (1814-1907), the minister of St. Paul's and principal of the college from 1847, until he was appointed the first bishop of Tasmania in 1864. The building (now an engineering workshop) served as the practising school until 1854, when a purpose-built school was opened next to the main college buildings. In his own educational philosophy Close was at first influenced by Samuel Wilderspin (1791-1866), but this was soon eclipsed by the work of the Scottish educationalist, David Stow (1793-1864). In Close's opinion 'There is nothing in the Glasgow system inapplicable to institutions conducted on the principles of the Church of England'. Stow's methods were practised by many of the early members of staff.

Apart from his work in the training of teachers, infant education and the work of National schools, Close was also actively involved in other aspects of education. As one of the Vice-Presidents and Chairman of the board of directors of Cheltenham College (1841) Close ensured that the school was conducted on Evangelical principles. Until the early 1860's the school reflected this outlook, but during the next twenty years it lost its Evangelical character. Close was also actively involved in the provision of a school for the deaf and dumb (1836) a diocesan boys' school (1839), a proprietary school for the sons of tradesmen, (1845), new buildings for the eighteenth century Charity School (opened 1847), the revival of the Tudor grammar school (re-opened 1852) as well as supporting other schools throughout the area. Nationally he was involved in all of the educational debates of the day, submitted evidence for a parliamentary commission on education, and was one of the Evangelical clergy who was so opposed to the influence of the Tractarian movement on the National Society, that the Church of England Education Society was formed in 1852.

On leaving the town in 1856, a Wesleyan minister suggested that to mark Close's considerable educational achievement in the town, 'The Francis Close Institution' should be erected to his memory. In one sense this took place four years after his death when in 1886, the 'Dean Close Memorial School' was established, to promote the Evangelical education which was no longer being provided by Cheltenham College. Yet Close's greatest educational achievement

was the training school. Writing in the mid 1880's, an anonymous writer had said, 'If Dr Close had done nothing else for Cheltenham, or for education, than to establish this most remarkable institution, he would still leave behind him an enduring monument of his zeal and singleness of purpose'. Such is the 'Francis Close Hall'.

REV. ALAN MUNDEN.

CORRUPT ELECTIONEERING AT GLOUCESTER, 1880

The Times of the 10 March, 1880, remarked that 'Never, perhaps since the passing of the Reform Act of 1832 has an electoral battle been fought out in the United Kingdom with more determination than is likely to be now displayed.' In Gloucester, judging by a piece of Liberal propaganda, the electoral battle was to be fought out in a more literal manner than *The Times* might have imagined:

'They saw the foe approaching,
The army of the Blue,
Under St. John of Prinknash Park,
And the bold Killebrew.
Their aide-de-camp, 'The Colonel'
Was in quaint armor dight;
With Banners Blue, and Brassy Bands,
And Bags of Sovereigns in their hands,
'Twas thus they sought to fight.'

This rhyme acknowledges a long-standing practice in Gloucester elections, whether Parliamentary or Municipal, that the candidates must be prepared to spend vast sums of money, and indulge in fierce competition in this with their opponents. 'The act of voting,' said Dr. Arnold, ' . . . becomes indeed a very important Christian duty, not to be discharged hastily or selfishly, in blind prejudice or passion, from self-interest or a more careless good nature and respect of persons but deliberately, seriously and calmly, and, so far as we can judge in our deceitful hearts, purely.' A Gloucesterian expressed his electoral morality equally as honestly, but more succinctly:

'Him as gives most shall have my vote.'

The sole qualification required to represent Gloucester was, it seemed, a full purse.

In 1816, £40,000 had been spent by the participants, and though the amounts involved decreased as the century went on, with the increasing numbers of middle-class candidates, the extent of the corruption remained almost universal.

The government was not unaware of the situation. Two petitions had been lodged between 1832 and 1880, and in 1859 a Royal Commission had been appointed for the City. This discovered that extensive malpractices had prevailed, and the election had been declared null and void. In fact 'one of the

oldest inhabitants, placed in the witness-box, and desired to ransack his memory, could only say that before the Reform Act of 1832 the bribery had been more indirect.¹ Subsequently, the 1867 Reform Act widened the franchise from being limited to freemen and £10 householders to include all rate-paying householders. The 1872 Ballot Act was intended to render useless bribery at elections by making the candidates unable to ascertain who had voted for them after they had paid out. The 1873 by-election in the city bore out the effectiveness of these measures, and it seemed that the problem of election corruption had been overcome. After the 1880 election, however, it was proved that widespread malpractice had again prevailed, and 22 petitions were lodged, of which 16 were successful. 8 Royal Commissions were set up — at Oxford, Chester, Macclesfield, Boston, Canterbury, Sandwich and Gloucester.

In the city, the period of campaign, which had lasted from 8 to 30 March, things passed quietly, perhaps because, as several Bishops protested, the election fell during Passion week and Easter week. But certainly, there was little drunkenness on polling day, 30 March, and with the abolition of public nominations of candidates in the Guild Hall some years previously, rowdy scenes at the beginning of the campaign were prevented.

The Liberal candidates were Charles James Monk, a son of a Bishop of Gloucester and old boy of King's School, who had lost his seat following the 1859 investigation, but who had been one of Gloucester's two M.P.s for more than twenty years. His partner was Thomas Robinson, who had been scheduled for issuing bribes on behalf of the Liberals in 1859, though he protested it had been a 'regular plant' on him.² There seemed to be some distrust between the two since, contrary to the usual practice, Monk insisted on keeping their expenses separated.

The two Conservatives were William Killigrew Wait, a corn merchant from Clifton, near Bristol, and Benjamin St. John Ackers, a farmer, who owned Prinknash Park, a few miles to the north-east of Gloucester. Rather against the run of the poll, Wait had been elected with Monk in the 1874 General Election, but rather through the lack of a viable second Liberal than through any great personal popularity. Ackers, like Robinson, was standing for the first time, but did not have the latter's familiarity with the electors.

Gloucester was traditionally a Liberal stronghold, and with the strong swing towards that party, it is not surprising to find that both Monk and Robinson were elected with fairly comfortable majorities. On the whole, bribery would seem to have had little total effect on the outcome of the polling:—

1. Robinson — 2,797 votes
2. Monk — 2,690 votes
3. Wait — 2,304 votes
4. Ackers — 1,898 votes

In the city, as in the country generally, the Liberals seemed to be in the ascendant. A 'Liberal Hundred' had been established just after the 1874 election, and the tradition of Liberalism is reflected by the fact that the extant propaganda is totally, almost, anti-Conservative. Robinson and Monk were both well-known local figures, and the Conservatives had only a 'Sick Benefit Society', and no properly elected local party hierarchy; the active canvassing by the Tories could not overcome ingrained traditions and contemporary trends.

The first public recognition of corruption came when the defeated Conservatives lodged a petition against the Liberal conduct of, and the result of the election. As a result, Baron Pollock and Sir Henry Hawkins heard evidence against Monk and Robinson in the Guild Hall, and in the Committee Rooms of the House of Commons. The two judges were made suspicious not only by the possibilities of corruption, but also because there was a suspicion that there had been collusion between the parties over the Petition. A select Committee of Sir E. Colebrook, Viscount Galway, Sir Henry Jackson, and Messrs. Stanhope and Whitbread was set up, which, after further investigations, recommended the institution of a Royal Commission for Gloucester. The Conservatives, apparently realizing that they had as much to lose as the Liberals in the event of any enquiry, came to an agreement, written down, but not signed by the candidates, by which both sides agreed to drop the matter of the petition. But it was too late; the wheels of justice were already turning. When Robinson seemed unwilling to defend his seat (which was declared vacant), when the Conservatives seemed unwilling to press their charges, and when Monk's counsel failed to apply for costs to which he was entitled, the commissioners' suspicions were strengthened. Sufficient evidence had been gathered against Robinson's agent, Haines, to declare his seat vacant, but it was decided that further enquiry was necessary in the case of Monk, a long-standing Member of the House. The Attorney General, Sir Henry James reluctantly moved for the authorisation for a Parliamentary act for a Royal Commission for Gloucester and the other suspect areas.

Eventually, six months after the election, on the first of September the three Commissioners were appointed. They were all Barristers, John Bridge Aspinall, William Robert McConnell, and Francis William Raikes, and they began to hear evidence on the 9 October 1880. Their investigations lasted, in Gloucester and Westminster, until 10 January 1881.

The Commissioners had to be on the watch for direct bribing (with money), indirect bribing (with food and drink), and colourable employment, by which the parties hired voters as doormen, messengers or footmen, for which they were paid money without any earning of the money being undertaken or required. The transporting of voters, illegal in all but the largest boroughs until just before an election as part of Holker's Parliamentary and Corrupt Practices Act of 1879, which had allowed transportation in the counties. The law was universally ignored, it was claimed in Parliament, and to remove the anachronism the relevant clause in the Act was repealed as one of the last measures of the defunct Parliament. With the small number of Members still in London with the election imminent, this aroused some controversy, and was quite important for Gloucester, since some of the city's rate-payers lived in Sharpness, a docks area several miles down the Severn. These voters were regarded as being Conservative, and it had been Monk who had spoken for the Opposition against the measure in the Commons. In the 1874 election, which was also investigated in the course of the enquiry, transportation had been illegal.

In 1880, direct bribery seems to have taken place all over the city, and among all social classes. City Aldermen, such as Robinson and John Ward, a senior local Conservative, had been responsible for distributing bribes, as had John Barnard, a magistrate. More humble people were found to have accepted

bribes; drivers, labourers, postmen, cordwainers, and even a Cathedral beadsman, George Wilton, were scheduled.

The party systems of finance were devious. Cooke, the Conservative agent, told Wait and Ackers that £1,500 should see them both through, but a fortnight before polling day, it was decided twice this sum would be necessary to 'get the people to the Polls', a common euphemism for bribing. Wait's business partners, John Dod and John Barnard, agreed to help him with the money. Dod obtained £1,500 in Clifton, and sent it to Barnard in Gloucester. The manager of the County of Gloucester Bank, a Mr Raven, converted the notes into gold, under the orders of Thomas Taynton, one of the Presidents of the Bank, and it was taken to John Ward's house by a disguised courier, going under the code-name of 'Picket', later revealed to have been Taynton's son. Ward then distributed the money among twelve Public Houses hired as Committee Rooms. None of the transactions was recorded, and deeds tended to be done under the cover of darkness. Secrecy was at a premium, a new development in Gloucester elections.

The Liberals fixed no amount to be spent, but three or four days before the election, the leading party men met at Alderman Mousell's house. Mousell, Trevor Powell and John Stephens discussed how much should be spent, and what proportion on bribing, it was admitted. Mousell agreed to furnish £1,000 from his business interests, and Powell £480. Mousell also agreed to borrow £200 from J. A. Mathews, a future town councillor. Again, transactions took place in gold, to avoid cheques and notes, and nothing was written down.

For example, Jabez Franklin, 'an active elector on behalf of the Conservatives'² received a total of £510 in three smaller payments from John Ward, and distributed it in his own house, a change from the usual use of Pubs. He began bribing on the evening before polling day, (so as to 'lighten my work for the next day',) when business began in earnest. He used a new system in the guilt-ridden Gloucester elections. From the Conservatives he had received a register of city electors, and in a front room of his house people were ticked off as they appeared. They were given cards with their names on, and they would proceed to the rear of the house and pass through an outside passage adjacent to the kitchen. Some bricks had been removed from around the door frame to make a small hole, and as people passed they handed their cards in through it and received in exchange a sovereign. Thus the person distributing the money — known locally as 'The Man in the Moon' — would remain anonymous. Franklin's carefully prepared plans were rendered useless. From 7.30 a.m. the numbers of people to be bribed increased rapidly. 'The voters did come rather thick, like a pack of hounds, and I was obliged to shut down and go to cover.'³ News of the availability of cash 'spread like a telegram message', and soon the £510 were exhausted. The number of people whom he had bribed could not be exactly ascertained, because in the press of bodies Franklin had been unable to keep his register in order, and he suspected many people had come more than once.

Both sides made wide use of Gloucester Pubs, as Committee Rooms. Again, registers were used to check voters as they appeared. They were given tickets, and escorted to the polling booth, in an attempt to impress upon his conscience the need to vote for the party which would pay him. Afterwards, he would

be paid. The publicans themselves seemed to have gained very little, as, contrary to tradition, there was very little drunkenness on polling day, which the surprised Commissioners commented on. The 'Sugar Shops' (so called because voters used to have their drinks 'sugared' with coins) had become offices between 1859 and 1880.

These methods of bribing, despite their efficient application, were rendered useless by the Ballot. Of the thousands of people interviewed, 2,185 out of an electorate of 5,767 were scheduled, and many of these confessed that they had received money from both sides, or voted according to their whims, no matter who paid them. Voting secretly, the threat of violent action could no longer be employed against these abusers or the abuses could no longer be employed. As one of the Commissioners remarked:

'I am bound to say after this, if there should be any further elections for Gloucester, any candidate who spends his money in bribery, or any supporter of any candidate who spends money in bribery, will be a lunatic.'³

Following the institution of the secret ballot, the immediate effect was an apparent increase in election corruption, with 22 petitions being presented in 1874, and 28 in 1880. Beresford Hopesaid in the Commons, 'I opposed the Ballot at its rise; I oppose it now in the day of its disgrace and exposure'. But, five years later, only eight petitions appeared, and only three in 1886, whereas in the 1860's, fifty or sixty were presented. In the country as a whole, as well as in Gloucester, it seems that the Ballot Act of 1872 was efficient in destroying the ingrained tradition of corruption at elections. It succeeded because it made bribing impractical, rather than relying on morals, or punitive threats. Taking a bribe as a recompense for the working-time lost in voting was an accepted practice in Gloucester, and was not regarded as being morally wrong, until the amount of legislation passed in the latter half of the nineteenth century convinced people of their guilt. The 1868 Election Petition and Corrupt Practices at Elections Act, the Ballot Act of 1872, besides the earlier Commission in the city in 1859, combined in people's minds to convince them of the illegality of their parts in election corruption, and caused the processes of bribery to become more secretive, and less enjoyed. Disraeli, in 1880, could not complain, as Gladstone had in 1874, of having 'been swept away, literally, by a torrent of beer and gin.' While bribing lasted after the Ballot Act, before it was realized to be totally impracticable, it was carried out in a more serious, guilty, way.

With the Ballot, bribery seems to have had little overall effect on the result of the election in Gloucester, Jabez Franklin and John Ward both estimated, from their wide experience of city elections, that between 400 and 600 people voted only according to which side paid them. These seemed to be the poorer members of society, who could only afford to leave their places of employment if they were given money to vote. Franklin revealed that all classes came to him: 'there were some respectable people, and some who ought not have come to be bribed.'³ But, the candidates could never be sure whether people would vote for them even if they were given money to do so, and the powers of Landlord coercion were similarly useless.

If the 1872 Act had made the application of corrupt practices impracticable, it still left the candidates themselves in a comparatively free position. Monk

and Robinson were enabled, by blaming their agent, Haines, for all corruption committed in their names, to escape charges. Monk said some of his supporters had acted 'wildly and rashly in the extreme'.³ Robinson claimed 'I left everything in the hands of my legal agent; I relied on him conducting the election in strict accordance with the law.' He 'never saw a more orderly or better conducted election in my life.' Wisely, perhaps, on the day of polling itself when most of the bribing took place he found himself 'regularly knocked up', and was forced to spend the rest of the day in bed. He also claimed not to have examined the Canvass books, despite his activities during the period of campaign. Had he done so, he might have seen such curious entries as 'Votes Liberal on one condition', that is, when paid.³ He was forced to admit that some of his supporters had been 'earnest but indiscreet', but lacking any direct proof of his complicity, the Commissioners were unable to schedule him.

The Conservatives were less fortunate. Wait admitted his knowledge of corruption at previous elections, and 'ought to have expected it' at this one. Having paid their initial £1,500, they were later asked for double this amount 'to get the people to the poll',³ an accepted euphemism for bribing. The Commissioners remarked that 'anything in excess (of £1,600 or £1,700) . . . must have been required for a questionable purpose.' Wait was found to have been guilty of 'sanctioning money for illegal purposes.'

Ackers, less experienced than Wait was not scheduled. He knew that 'all the elections in Gloucester are lavish',³ but did not see any evidence of corruption on the Conservative side, but suspected the Liberals when 'on the afternoon of the election . . . a very ardent Conservative . . . cursed us very vigorously from a Yellow Public House.' 'Up to the last minute before the Polling day', he thought, 'if you might judge from outsoor appearance, there would be no doubt that the Conservatives were the popular candidates.'

One of the Commissioners remarked that 'political feeling seems to run high in Gloucester.' This, coupled with the belief that 'all the elections in Gloucester are lavish' seemed to produce a continuance of corruption after the Ballot Act rendered it useless. It was a case of either both or neither parties using bribery; if one did, the other would follow suit. John Ward remarked that 'I do not believe it is possible for the Liberals to fight without using money, and that we must fight them with their own weapons.'³ Most people, too, still seemed to accept corruption in 1880. When the question of a movement for purity in city elections was broached, Jabez Franklin commented that it had been in existence 'about five minutes; only since this Commission has been on!'³ Corruption after the Ballot was perpetuated through tradition rather than through efficacy.

Largely as a result of the enquiries such as the one held in Gloucester, the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act was passed in 1883. The two clauses which most affected Gloucester and her elections seemed to be the limiting of expenditure, and the making of candidates and agents equally responsible for corruption. Gloucester's expenses were limited to a total of £1,500, about a quarter of the old sums. At roughly £375 per candidate, this left little free for bribing, and made the universal application of corruption of former days impossible. By sharing responsibility between agent and candidate, it was also too dangerous for the latter.

The period 1868—1883 saw more electoral legislation than any other in British history, and it was successful, eventually, in stopping wide-spread corruption. But it was removed through the practical measures of making it more expensive through widening the franchise, and less practical by imposing the Ballot. A basically moral aim, the desire for fair elections, was accomplished in practical terms. Traditional techniques of fighting elections 'With bags of sovereigns in their hands' had to be rethought. Naturally, elections became more honest, but, as was complained at the time, more dull.

SOURCES

1. A contemporary magazine *All the Year Round*. November 12th, 1859.
2. *Commissioner's Report and Minutes of Evidence*, 1859.
3. *Commissioner's Report and Minutes of Evidence*, 1881.
4. *Catalogue of Gloucester Elections, Vol. II.* (Cartoons and propaganda.)
5. *The Elimination of Corrupt Practices in British Elections, 1868-1914.*
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K. P. CHAPPELL

EDWARD JENKINS AND CHARLOTTE BALFOUR: A REGENCY ROMANCE

IN CHELTENHAM'S SUFFOLK Square stands a small Gothic Revival church — now redundant and used as a Parish Centre — whose building history is a chronology of delays and disappointments. St. James' was one of several new churches built during the 1820's to cope with Cheltenham's rapidly increasing population. Its construction was financed on the 'proprietary system', whereby shares in the building were sold, each share entitling its purchaser to the use of a pew in the completed church. This pew could then be rented out to other inhabitants and visitors to give the purchaser (or 'proprietor') a return on his investment.¹

Work on the church began in 1825, but was not completed until 1829, for a number of problems arose during the course of its building, among them a serious disagreement between the building committee and their architect, a local man named Edward Jenkins. Towards the end of 1826, certain of the shareholders asserted that neither the roof of the partly-built church, nor the pillars supporting its interior galleries were of sufficient strength, and eventually two Birmingham architects, Thomas Rickman and Henry Hutchinson were called in to mediate. Although their report has not survived, one of the drawings which accompanied it has², and this does suggest that alterations were made to Jenkins' design for the roof span. Shortly after, owing to a lack of funds, work on the building stopped altogether for several months, and when it resumed in Autumn 1827 it was with the London architect, J. B. Papworth in control of the work, and not Edward Jenkins.

Although Jenkins' apparent replacement as architect was undoubtedly due to these technical problems, new evidence from a contemporary newspaper might well suggest that the Building Committee had further cause for dissatisfaction with Jenkins. On Monday, July 10th, 1826 the *Cheltenham Journal* carried the following item, entitled 'From a correspondent':—

“At the early part of last week our spinsters, old maids and bachelors were on the tiptoe of delight, for that mischievous girl, scandal had circulated a report that an elopement had taken place. An elopement! An elopement! Have you heard of the elopement? circulated from one end of the town to the other like wildfire and such was the rapidity of the report’s progress that few young ladies ears were not fondly tickled with the pleasing intelligence in the space of 24 hours. Who is the happy one! how delightful in these times of poverty to be enlivened with such an occurrence was the universal exclamation. On enquiry it was found that the only daughter of wealthy gentleman, lately returned from the East Indies, had taken a most undutiful advantage of papa’s absence in London and threw herself under the protection of a handsome architect, to whom ere this she is no doubt united by the everlasting cement of wedlock. Such was the over anxiety of the fond couple, that they could not even wait for the finishing of a new church, the swain had lately been building, when the happy pair might be themselves the first fond votaries of Hymen within its sacred walls. Love, however, admits no delay; the church, at least the *new* church, is neglected for a moment and the run-aways are shortly expected back to claim papa’s forgiveness, and to sit down for the remainder of their days in the temple of happiness”.

The ‘handsome architect’ is undoubtedly Jenkins, his bride one Charlotte Balfour, and the ‘new church . . . neglected for the moment’, St. James, Suffolk Square — for just a fortnight later, on July 24th, the *Journal* announced the marriage in London on July 4th, 1826 of Edward Jenkins and Charlotte Balfour, the daughter of Walter Balfour of Cheltenham.

Little is known of either Jenkins or the Balfours. The earliest reference to Jenkins is in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* for July 1st, 1824, which states that “the improvements carrying into effect on the property around Suffolk House must add considerable importance to the vicinity. The projection of the north side of (Suffolk) Square proceeds rapidly under the superintendence of Mr E. Jenkins, architect, to whose taste and skill the designs are most creditable”.³ Suffolk Square was laid out in 1824 - 5 by property developer James Fisher, who also provided the site for St. James’ Church, and who clearly employed Jenkins as his architect. Walter Balfour originally came from Edinburgh, and probably settled in Cheltenham during the early 1820’s. In around 1824 - 5 he built himself a house in the newly laid out ‘Park Place’ (now known as Suffolk Lawn), another part of James Fisher’s estate. Here, Jenkins also owned some building land, later transferred to Balfour to enlarge the latter’s garden, and it is by no means impossible that Jenkins provided the architectural designs for Balfour’s house, and perhaps first met his future wife during the course of its building.⁴

Balfour was also a shareholder in the new church, and correspondence of July 1826 between himself and the Secretary of the Building Committee, Dr. Newall, may suggest that his disapproval of the elopement prompted a wish to disassociate himself from the church which Jenkins was building. On July 8th, he wrote to Newall stating that “as it is my intention to quit Cheltenham, and being most anxious to settle every account, and to get rid of all my property here — will you therefore be so kind as to get me released from being a subscriber to the new church now building in Suffolk Square”. Dr. Newall tried

to dissuade him, and seems to have succeeded in doing so, for Balfour is still recorded as a shareholder at the consecration of the church in October 1830, and he certainly appears to have lived in Cheltenham until around 1833.

Exactly when the newly-weds returned to Cheltenham is uncertain, although Jenkins produced a 'statement of work done' at the church in October 1826. By June 1827, however he was writing to the Building Committee from an address at Broad Street, Warwick, and he is listed in Pigot's 1828 Directory as resident at Leamington Spa.⁵ This may, however, have been no more than a brief interlude away from Cheltenham, or he is once again listed, as an architect, at 154 High Street, in Griffith's 1828 *Guide to Cheltenham*, and on September 7th 1831, Edward and Charlotte baptised twin sons at St. Mary's Church, Cheltenham, the names chosen — Edward Balfour Jenkins and Balfour Jenkins — perhaps being evidence of the reconciliation with father which was hinted at in the newspaper report of the elopement. Certainly Jenkins' social and financial standing appears to have risen after 1828, the product perhaps of a well-chosen marriage. In 1831 he is referred to as 'esquire', and in 1837 when he is next recorded, living at 2 Darlington Place, Bathwick, he is 'Edward Jenkins, gentleman'.

The Jenkins' move to Bath is perhaps further evidence of a reconciliation with Walter Balfour, who is recorded in Bath directories as resident at 5 South Parade in that city between 1833 and 1837. He fails to appear again after that date, and the Jenkins are last recorded in Bath in 1841.⁶ The only other reference to them thereafter is in August 1848,⁷ when Charlotte Jenkins, "the wife of Edward Jenkins, late of the City of Bath but now of Islington in the County of Middlesex, esquire", was admitted to her late father's copyhold property at Cheltenham — 6 Suffolk Lawn, where she had lived a quarter of a century earlier, and from where her marriage most probably began. Undoubtedly far more might be learnt of Edward, Charlotte and their family by research at Bath, Islington and perhaps elsewhere — and once undertaken it may be possible to provide more details of their lives in a future edition of this *Bulletin*.

DR. STEVEN BLAKE, Keeper of Social History,
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Footnotes

1. For a fuller account of the building of St. James Church see S. Blake, *Cheltenham's Churches and Chapels* (1979) p.p. 11-18.
2. In the Royal Institute of British Architects Drawings Collection, which also contains a number of Jenkins' architectural designs for the church.
3. Quoted in *Cheltenham Chronicle* June 28 1924. I owe this reference to Mr Roger Beacham. A number of Jenkins' elevations for houses in Suffolk Square are contained in Gloucestershire Records Office D2025 Box 32.
4. Details of Jenkins' and Balfour's involvements in the Suffolk Estate and St. James Church are from deeds and correspondence in G.R.O.D. 2025 Boxes 31-2 and 137.
5. H. Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of English Architects*, p. 457.
6. Details from *Silverthorne's Bath Directories* 1833-41.
7. Cheltenham Manor Court Books, GRO D855 vol. 19 p. 160.