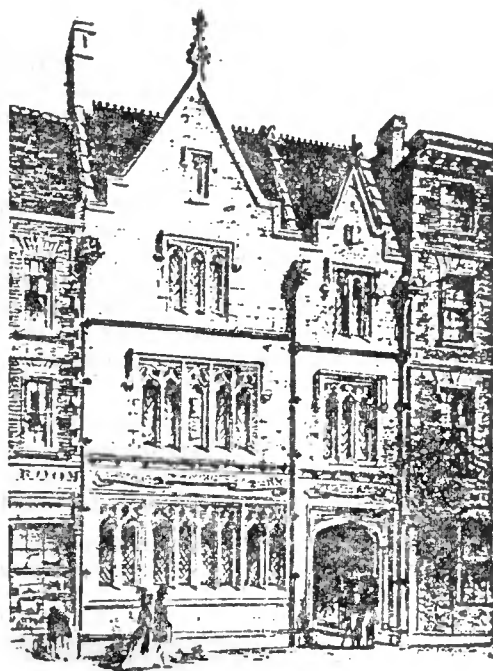


GLOUCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

# Local History Bulletin

SPRING 1984 — No. 49



## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
THE KINGSCOTE OF KINGSCOTE — <i>Arthur Kingscote Potter</i>	3
BANKING IN GLOUCESTER — <i>Natwest Bank Archives</i>	6
GLOS. TRAINING COLLEGE OF DOMESTIC SCIENCE — — — — — <i>Ann Wright</i>	8
A LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY — <i>Elizabeth Skinner</i>	14



COMMUNITY HOUSE, COLLEGE GREEN,  
GLOUCESTER GL1 2LZ

Tel. Gloucester (0452) 28491

## EDITORIAL

This issue reflects a wide variety of local history interest. The article on the Kingscotes, by a member of that family, reflects the rural and landed strand in Gloucestershire's past. Those who are interested in the county's administrative history, principally in the nineteenth century, will welcome the glance at the background of the Kingscotes.

The contribution on Banking in Gloucester commemorates the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the oldest provincial branch of the National Provincial Bank and is partly a follow-up to the recent article on Jemmy Wood, the Banker. (This article sparked some interest in the local Gloucestershire family who owned the shop next to Jemmy Wood's Bank for 150 years and also from a gentleman who has a bank note bearing the signatures of Jemmy Wood and A. Surman).

Ann Wright's essay on the Gloucestershire Training College of Domestic Science amplifies the **Short History** written by Miss Ruth Whittaker and covering the years from 1890 to 1944 and by Miss Burella Taylor, which spans the years from 1944 to 1956.

Finally, Elizabeth Skinner contributes a valuable and distinctive view on how to garner local history and shows us local history literally in the making.

BRYAN JERRARD



The Front Cover Illustration Shows the bank at Westgate Street, Gloucester in 1844, and is reproduced by permission of the National Westminster Bank P.L.C. It is interesting to compare the picture with the one in our previous issue, No. 48 (see left).

## THE KINGSCOTE OF KINGSCOTE

In the *Lives of the Berkeleys* written by John Smyth, steward of the Berkeley household, is the following quaint passage concerning Anthony Kingscote, the lord of Kingscote in the early seventeenth century (1):—

'It may be said of this ancient gentleman and of his family, as doubtless of noe other in this country nor thinke of many others in this kingdome, That hee and his lineall ancestors have continued in this little manor nowe about 500 yeares, never attained nor dwellings out of it elsewhere; nor hath the tide of his Estate higher or lower flowed or ebbed in better or worse condition; But like a fixed starre in his firmament, to have remained without motion in this litle orbe, without any remarkable change; And as the name of his first ancestor that is not perished — Ausgerus, importeth, is hereditarily a Saxon.'

This was in 1629. The Kingscote family were to continue for a further 300 years in the manor until it passed out of their possession during the 1939-45 war.

The family is described by J. H. Round (2) as 'one of our oldest — our very oldest — houses.' It originated in about 1155 with the marriage of a certain Nigel FitzArthur to Aldeva, youngest daughter of Robert FitzHardinge, who brought as her dower the manor of Kingscote ('Chingscote' in Domesday Book). In the words of Smyth, who had seen the deed of gift of the manor and the deed by which Henry II confirmed the gift:

'Aldeve . . . youngest daughter of this lord Robert was marryed . . . also to Nigel of Kingscote, sonne of Arthur, then owner of divers lands in Combe in the (parish) of Wotton underedge (which were her Joynter) and one of the eight pledges of this lord Robert in the agreement at Bristowe, with whom this lord Robert her father gave in marriage the manor of Kingscote adjoining Combe, To hold of him by half a knight's fee, which grant King Henry aforesayd confirmed.'

Robert FitzHardinge was a wealthy merchant and provost of Bristol who had assisted Henry financially in his wars against King Stephen. As a reward for his expenditure Henry, later as king, gave him the barony of Berkeley — which was taken away from Roger of Dursley who had espoused the cause of King Stephen against Henry. Robert FitzHardinge thus became the first baron by tenure of Berkeley.

We know very little about Nigel FitzArthur and his father, Arthur. Nigel was evidently a person of some standing to have been chosen as one of the pledges of Robert FitzHardinge in the agreement at Bristol of 1142 in the presence of Stephen and the Empress Matilda (Maud) and her son Henry, Duke of Normandy and Earl of Anjou when the future of the kingdom was arranged by the succession of Stephen by Henry. The earliest ancestor

of the Kingscote family is also something of a mystery. Smyth records him as a Saxon, Ausgerus who lived at Kingscote in 985.

Nigel FitzArthur became known as Nigel de Kingscote. The Norman 'de' came gradually to be dropped, certainly after 1286 when an inquisition records the manor as held by Richard de Kingscote.

The main source of the Kingscotes in succeeding centuries may be found in T. D. Fosbrooke's *Copious History of the Castle and Parish of Berkeley* of 1821. Fosbrooke records that a Kingscote was present at the battle of Poitiers in 1356 and another at Agincourt in 1415. This is corroborated by Smyth who reminds us that the Baron Berkeley of the day was at each of these battles.

From the nineteenth century onwards much more is known about the family. Robert Kingscote (1751-1840) rebuilt the house at Kingscote and he was a regular attender at the Quarter Sessions. He was Colonel of the North Gloucestershire Militia and, according to H. Costley-White (3) the godfather of the future 6th Earl of Berkeley, the first son born to Mary Cole after she was officially married to the 5th Earl. Robert's younger sister Katherine married Dr. Edward Jenner, M.D., F.R.S., who nearly lost his life when visiting Kingscote during an intensely cold winter in 1786. (4)

Another visitor, a young French lady in 1834, recorded a visit to Kingscote:

'I visited several miles from Frocester a family which left a great impression on me. The head of the family was a retired Colonel Kingscote. He lived with his sister-in-law in one of the many English properties of which one does not see the like in aristocratic cachet anywhere. Herds of deer wandered about the park; the woods were a delicious labyrinth, half artificial, half natural, where the honeysuckle and the wild clematis interlaced coquettishly, breathing repose and goodwill. The children of Mrs Kingscote were of an ideal beauty and the house one of the richest in the country . . .'

Robert was unmarried. On his death his younger brother Thomas Kingscote (1758-1811) having predeceased him, the manor passed to Thoma's son, Thomas Henry Kingscote (1799-1861). Thomas Henry and his brother Henry Robert (1802-1882) were well known in the hunting field. Nimrod in his *Hunting Reminiscences* of 1843 records that 'the Messrs. Kingscote . . . have done honour to the power of the horse, having ridden as hard and as well as it is possible to ride to hounds, with the fearful odds of a giant's stature (Thomas Henry stood at 6 ft. 6 ins.) and sixteen stone against the ten stone men on their thoroughbred tits . . .'

Thomas Henry married a daughter of the 6th Duke of Beaufort and then, after her death, a daughter of the 1st Lord Bloomfield. The son of the first marriage, Robert Nigel Kingscote

(1830-1908) had a distinguished career: Scots Fusilier Guards, M.P. (Liberal) for West Gloucestershire 1852-1885 (5), A.D.C. to Lord Raglan (his uncle) in the Crimean War 1854-1855 (6), brevet Lieutenant-Colonel and C.B. 1855, Groom-in-Waiting to Queen Victoria 1859-1866, Receiver General to the Duchy of Cornwall 1888, K.C.B. 1889, Paymaster to the Household of King Edward VIII 1901 and G.C.V.O. 1902.

Of the sons of Thomas Henry's second marriage, the eldest FitzHardinge Kingscote (1837-1900) served in the 41st Regiment in the Crimean War and lost his right arm as the result of a wound sustained at the storming of the Redan at Sevastopol. He subsequently transferred to the Rifle Brigade and served in Canada and India. Henry Bloomfield Kingscote (1843-1915) played cricket and was in the strong Gloucestershire XI which included W. G., E. M. and G. F. Grace. Thomas Arthur FitzHardinge Kingscote (1845-1935) was Gentleman of the Cellars and Gentleman Usher to Queen Victoria and was continued in office by King Edward VII and King George V until his retirement in 1919. Thomas Arthur FitzHardinge's son, Maurice Kingscote, was well-known in fox-hunting circles. He was successively Master of the Tedworth and Field-Master of the Duke of Beaufort's and then for six years Master of the V.W.H. (Cricklade) and for fifteen years Master of the Meynell. For many seasons he was a first-class polo player.

Henry Robert Kingscote, mentioned above, was elected President of the M.C.C. in 1827 at the age of 24. In 1828 he 'took the initiative in arranging three matches to be played between Sussex and All-England to test the merits of round-arm bowling — or "throwing" as its opponents called it. Sussex's chief bowlers Lillywhite and Broadbridge were the protagonists of the round-arm controversy. Kingscote himself had the satisfaction of driving a ball from Lillywhite out of the Brighton ground.' (7) A narrow escape from drowning led Henry Robert to philanthropy and religion. He helped in alleviating distress in Ireland and was co-founder of the Church of England Scripture Readers' Association, the Metropolitan Visiting and Relief Association and the British and Colonial Emigration Society (8). Henry Robert's grandson, Algernon R. F. Kingscote (1888-1964) played for England in the Davis Cup both before and after 1914-1918 War and reached the final of the singles championship at Wimbledon in 1919. He was awarded the M.C. in the 1914-1918 War. After the War he helped to found the International Lawn Tennis Club of Great Britain in 1924 and served the Club as Chairman from 1928 to 1930 and from 1939 until 1960.

Arthur Kingscote Potter, C.M.G., C.B.E., Sept. 1983

- (1) J. Maclean ed. *The Berkeley Manuscripts; The Lives of the Berkeleys.*  
Trans. Bristol & Glos. Arch. Society, 1883.

- (2) J. H. Round Peerage and Pedigree, 1910.
- (3) H. Costley-White Mary Cole
- (4) Dorothy Fisk Life of Jenner, 1959.
- (5) H. Costley-White, op. cit. p.3. fn.1.
- (6) Robert Nigel's letters written to his father from the Crimea were found in a locked drawer of a rent-table bought by his niece (the writer's mother) at a sale at Kingscote in the 1920s. The letters are now in the National Army, Chelsea.
- (7) The Times (M.C.C. Number) May 25, 1937.
- (8) D.N.B.

### BANKING IN GLOUCESTER

The National Westminster Branch Bank at 21 Eastgate Street, Gloucester was opened on January 1, 1834 by the National Provincial Bank of England, one of National Westminster's principal antecedents. The Branch in Gloucester has the distinction of being the first to be opened.

The National Provincial Bank of England was founded in 1833 as a result of the campaigning of Thomas Joplin, a Newcastle timber merchant. The establishment of the bank followed legislation enacted in 1826 which allowed joint stock banks to be set up in England and Wales. The bank's head office was in the City of London but all its public banking officers were more than 65 miles from the Capital so that the bank could retain the valued right to issue its own banknotes.

Towards the end of 1833 the bank was seeking local support throughout England and Wales to effect its stated objective of opening in every town where its services might be demanded. It was in fact the first British bank with a truly national branch network.

On September 30, 1833 Edward Stewart informed his fellow Directors that he was about to visit Gloucester where some friends of his contemplated the forming of a joint stock bank and he was requested to "endeavour to procure the co-operation of his friends in Gloucestershire to further the views of this Company."

It appears from the Court minute book that Stewart entered into negotiations with Thomas Turner who had been conducting some banking business in the city since the failure of the firm of Turner and Morris in 1825. The suggested opening of the bank's branch in Gloucester with Turner as its Manager was generally approved by the Directors on October 12 subject to

an investigation into the state of Turner's business proving satisfactory. Three days later the Court confirmed the arrangements made and authorised Edward Stewart to carry them into effect.

On November 23 the following advertisement appeared in the **Gloucester Journal**:

"The Directors of the National Provincial Bank of England have made arrangements for the establishment of a branch bank at Gloucester, take this early opportunity of communicating to the Public their intention of commencing business in that city on the 1st day of January next, at their Office in King Street. The object of the Company is to carry banking on its best principles, and with undoubted security to the public, into the agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing districts. It has its supreme seat of direction in London, and the business at Gloucester will be conducted by Thomas Turner, Esq, as Manager, aided by one or two local Directors.

It is the intention of the Directors to assign shares to parties resident in the country, where branches shall be established for the purpose of creating or extending local interests. By order of the Court of Directors, T. L. Murray, Secretary. London, November 20, 1833."

Stewart appears to have moved more swiftly than his colleagues who were exploring the opening of branches in such places as Liverpool, Sheffield, Boston, Birmingham, Worcester and Brecon. The local connections in Gloucester must have been substantial for in that first year branches were subsequently opened at Wotton-under-Edge (June 10), Chipping Sodbury (September 26), Bath (October 1) and Cheltenham (October 13).

The Bank endeavoured to develop Thomas Joplin's idea of making each branch a separate bank and notes bearing the title "National Provincial Bank of Gloucester" were printed in this period. However, differences arose over the division of control and allocation of profits or losses between the local shareholders and the parent bank and the systems was abandoned in April 1835, Joplin subsequently resigning. Nevertheless the progress of the Bank was not checked and by the Annual General Meeting of the following month 20 branches had been opened.

In 1843 the Manager of Gloucester forwarded to the Directors in London plans for a new Bank House to be built in Westgate Street. The site had previously been occupied by the bank of Jemmy Wood, a colourful private banker whose business had merged with the Gloucestershire Banking Company which eventually became part of Lloyds Bank. The new premises for the National Provincial, designed by Dawkes and built by Wingate, were completed in March 1844. The building is said to have been one of the earliest Victorian banking buildings in a Gothic style.

Redevelopment took place at the Bank's Head Office in Bishopsgate and in 1866 Gibsons building at 15 Bishopsgate, now

"National Westminster Hall," was ready for occupation and the Bank opened to the public there and elsewhere in London for the first time, so foregoing its right to issue notes. By the 1880s Gloucester needed more room for its expanding business and on May 2, 1889 the branch moved into the present premises in Eastgate Street.

In 1918 the Bank amalgamated with the Union of London and Smiths Bank, whose ancestry on the Smiths side went back at Nottingham to 1658. The name was changed to National Provincial and Union Bank of England and the Bank was one of the "Big Five" to emerge from the spate of bank amalgamations completed at the end of the Great War.

In 1924 the Bank shortened the title of National Provincial Bank and Gloucester Branch bore this name until January 1, 1970 when the National Provincial, District, and Westminster Banks were finally brought together in the new National Westminster Bank.

NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK ARCHIVES,  
November, 1983.

#### GLoucestershire TRAINING COLLEGE OF DOMESTIC SCIENCE c 1918-1939

Gloucestershire had supported a training centre for domestic science teachers for over eighty years when the Gloucestershire College of Education closed in 1980. The development of this training centre has been partially described in the official college history (1), but some additional documents are now available, lodged in the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick. These documents form part of a very extensive archive which consists of the records belonging to the Association of Teachers of Domestic Science Ltd. (A.T.D.S.) spanning the period 1896-1974. (2)

The A.T.D.S. records show the growth of the Association from its origins as a technical sub-committee of the National Union of Women Workers 1896, its foundation as a separate Association in 1897 and its subsequent rise to national status as a specialist organisation of professional women. The A.T.D.S. papers provide detailed information about the development of domestic subjects and Home Economics, the contribution made by this area to education and training generally and the specific role played by it in peace and war-time. A national picture thus emerges from a scrutiny of committee minutes, conference reports, accounts and miscellaneous correspondence; and this national picture provides the background for local information.



Among the A.T.D.S. records are two collections which are directly related to the Gloucestershire Training College of Domestic Science; these collections give facts about college life c 1918-1939 from two points of view. The first information was provided by a former student, Miss B. Wakefield, and consists of a set of fourteen notebooks relating to lectures and coursework 1921-25. The second source of information consists of copies of the **Guild Chronicle 1921-49** which combined personal and social news with information about significant academic developments that made the Gloucestershire Training College a very important centre for education in domestic subjects between the wars. One or two of the **Guild Chronicles** have Miss Wakefield's name written in the front.

Miss Wakefield was a student at the college in the first part of the 1920s and her name is listed in 1923 as becoming a life member of the Guild Association. Her notebooks are carefully covered by hand in black cotton and each has a woven name tape stuck on the front; inside, the handwriting and presentation are meticulous and the range of notes, comments on practical work and detailed information give an interesting insight into coursework in domestic subjects and teacher-training during the early twenties. One of the first notebooks (October 1921) on **Infant Welfare** covers everything from the respiratory system to the adequate and necessary provision of nursery schools which were thought to develop the senses by providing organised patterns of play and rest. **The Theory of Education in relation to Domestic Subjects** (January 1921) contains a point which is to recur on a number of occasions during the inter-war period; the progress in status of the domestic subjects was seen to be clearly linked to the belief that manual and intellectual work should not be disassociated nor unrelated to the training of the aesthetic sense in cooking and housewifery. The other coursework recorded for 1921 (**Housewifery, Hygiene, Theory of Laundry and Needlework**) is practical and comprehensive. Amongst other things the notebooks cover cleaning a bathroom, re-caning a chair, what constitutes adequate sewage systems, roofing materials, preparations for washing and the use of the mangle and technical instruction on stitchery. Three Science notebooks list work 1921-22 and are also very practical with information on making good laundry soap, starch paste and bleaching by reduction. **Accounts** (January 1922) covers postal charges, commercial terms and information about banking.

The notebook listing **Teaching Record and Observations** covers the period 1921-25 and the final entry (October 2, 1925) suggests that the study of domestic subjects was essentially practical — boiled puddings, glass and china, starching, afternoon tea and breadmaking. The last notebooks on **Dressmaking and the Theory of Education** (September 1925) show that a history of fashion complemented pattern-making and that the theories of Froebel.

Montessori and Dalton were related to the topics of perception, personality and motivation — clearly an eclectic course of training. The immense variety and detail of Miss Wakefield's course is interesting in itself as an indication of the everyday skills and knowledge considered necessary for a domestic subjects teacher after World War I; what is also interesting is the relationship between what Miss Wakefield studied and the academic developments that were to come; lastly there is the question of domestic service which was no longer esteemed as an occupation and consequently left more women to resolve domestic problems than formerly.

The period c 1918-1939 was very significant in the development of the domestic subjects. The first tangible recognition of change was the statement made in the Fisher Act (1918) that domestic subjects were to be treated in the same way as other teaching subjects and that the continuation schools (to be established for the part-time education of adolescents leaving school under the age of sixteen) should have a practical curriculum in which domestic subjects should play an important part. The Training Schools were to be renamed Training Colleges and to be associated with the Normal Colleges under the same General Regulations. All teachers were to be paid on one salary scale and accorded the same pension rights. The Code of Regulations for the Training of Teachers which came into force in 1918 (set out in Circulars 1036 and 1041) simplified the previous five-volume Code and showed that the Board of Education envisaged a greater unity among all teachers in future. (3) The A.T.D.S. appointed its first General Secretary after the war and in 1920 the University of London granted the B.Sc. Degree in Household and Social Sciences. The evidence for speedy and very advanced development seemed assured nationally.

During the 1920s and 1930s the Gloucestershire Training College of Domestic Science had two remarkable women Principals — Miss Baddeley and Miss Whitaker. Miss Baddeley (known affectionately as The Chief) had succeeded the founder of the college, Mrs Playne, in 1893. Under her leadership the college flourished and Miss Baddeley played a full part in local affairs as a profile of her (printed shortly before her death in December 1923) indicated. (4) After 1918 student numbers grew, but despite an excellent report on the college's work produced by Miss Helen Stillitoe and a group of His Majesty's Inspectors in 1921 there were very serious financial problems. Fees were about double those of other colleges and enrolment figures fell from 143 in 1921 to 116 in 1924; in March 1924 when Miss Whitaker became Principal only six students were enrolled for September. Miss Whitaker's previous experience as a member of His Majesty's Inspectorate helped her to make changes, but during this period of doubt and difficulty the painstaking stand-

ards of college tuition and student effort were maintained, as Miss Wakefield's notebooks show.

The *Guild Chronicles* show that Miss Whitaker's time as Principal 1924-43 was remarkable for the growth in professional prestige made by the college. It also seems, however, that Miss Whitaker had an observant eye for dress; she decided to alter (against some opposition) the students' day wear which consisted of dark blue cotton blouses with white spot (known as "spotted dogs") and worn with a navy blue skirt, starched white collar, white apron, white sleeves and stiff white belt. Her reason for the change

"Young women of the present day do not, fortunately, wear underclothes of a kind to produce the neat figure on which alone such a complicated garb remains neat." (5)

The second alteration was to reduce the fees for the college to encourage a higher enrolment; and when Miss Whitaker returned from a visit to America in 1926 she was convinced of the need for women domestic science teachers with university qualifications. As a result a four year course was designed and taught in conjunction with Bristol University. Gloucestershire was the first Training College to develop a degree course, following the example given by King's College, London. Close links were formed with Bristol University which conferred the B.Sc. Degree (Dom. Sc.). In January 1927 Mr Bennett, a university lecturer in science gave a course of lectures on simple applied electricity to a mixed class of staff and students and Dr Helen Wodehouse, Bristol's first woman professor, (6) took a year's work on the Theory of Education with the three biggest student groups. The emphasis on new development of all kinds from experiments with labour-saving apparatus to the establishment of an Institutional Management course is very evident during Miss Whitaker's time as Principal. During her trip to America she had negotiated a year's scholarship for one of her staff at Columbia University in New York; Miss Evelyn Hale took up this scholarship the next year and thus began professional links which helped the progress of domestic science in this country. During these changes former students were kept informed of progress in their field and in the creation of a new understanding of what the domestic subjects involved scientifically and aesthetically.

During the 1930s academic progress continued with the three year course replacing the two year one with an optional extra year. The longer scheme was designed to help domestic subjects teachers to obtain headships; a wider training was also to include all the practical and theoretical elements of domestic subjects plus English. Although the syllabuses for the Language and Literature courses now seem inappropriately narrow for the purpose Miss Whitaker took them as part of a widening cultural context for the domestic subjects in which the free and expressive use of the mother tongue would give skill and aesthetic

pleasure to the students. Professor Wodehouse's address to the A.T.D.S. meeting in Gloucester on May 25, 1935 was on "The Philosophy of Home Making" (7) and gave what would now be described as a sociological perspective on a topic of contemporary concern. The central idea of the family and the home evoked the idea of a place where people belonged, a place which was part of the larger groupings of society and the state; home life ought not to be passive and the rights of all family members needed to be protected; the changing responsibilities and patterns of women's lives emphasised the importance of domestic life generally. This theme is continued in Ruth Whitaker's book (8) which has an introduction by Thomas Loveday, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bristol. The domestic arts as practised by housewives, teachers and administrators are no longer menial; the union of art and science shown in the link between some colleges and universities has given new status to the domestic subjects, soon to be collectively described as domestic science.

Former students who had followed the progress of the college in the **Guild Chronicle** published yearly were informed in 1929 that Gloucestershire County Council had agreed to an extension of the students' living quarters and further library development at Wotton; a loan of £33,000 was quickly repaid and in the year ending March 1933 no claim was made on rate support; the college was fully subscribed despite the financial circumstances of the depression. As the 1930s moved to an end social conditions generally became part of the college's concern. Healthy living conditions, good nutrition and a general need for an improved standard of living contributed to an educated understanding of the role of domestic science in society. The college which was housed in the disused barracks in the city had caused Miss Whitaker to remark as early as 1926:

"We live and work on the fringes of a slum at G.T.C.D.S. Instead of planning castles in the air of a move to more elegant regions, let us do our share to eliminate the slum."

Thirteen years after this was written the college was ready, however, for a move. In 1939 the County Council voted £49,000 to be spent on a new building; by December of that year Wotton (a major part of the college's property) was commandeered for use by the army and the outbreak of war ended building plans.

The A.T.D.S. had sought academic and intellectual respectability for domestic science and the Gloucestershire Training College had achieved this. The college had also provided opportunities for professional development among its staff and students which must have given them significant advantages in whatever they chose to follow. The period 1918-1939 is marked by the efforts of many staff and students and the leadership of two outstanding women Principals; these efforts are fully described in the **Guild Chronicle** and remain the best evidence of local pro-

gress in a field which was also of national interest. The coming of World War II brought inevitable change, but the ideas which the A.T.D.S. and the Gloucestershire Training College had supported in the thirties had become widespread in their acceptance. An issue of *Picture Post* (10) in 1941 gave details of planning for Britain after the war; among the plans was an article about the home which suggested that in the future the whole area of domestic life and skills would always be a subject worth thought as a reflection of society's humane values.

ANN WRIGHT

### REFERENCES

1. Taylor, M.B. **Gloucestershire Training College of Domestic Science**  
**A Short History** November, 1944 4th edition.  
(N.B: This short history was written (pp. 1—32) by Miss Ruth Whitaker and covered the years from 1890 to 1944. Miss Taylor wrote the subsequent section from 1944 to 1956. Ed.).
2. MSS 177      **Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick Library, Coventry CV4 7AL.**
3. Sillitoe, Helen **The History of the Teaching of Domestic Subjects** Methuen and Co. 1933 p. 165.
4. 'Who's Who in Gloucestershire' **Gloucestershire Chronicle** November 3, 1923 reprinted in **Guild Chronicle** Christmas 1923 pp. 5—8.
5. Taylor, M.B. *op. cit.* p. 12.
6. Cottle, B. and Sherborne J. W. **The Life of a University** J. W. Arrowsmith Ltd., 1959 pp. 99—100.
7. **Guild Chronicle** December 1935 no. 9 pp. 17—26.
8. **Modern Developments in Domestic Science Training** Dent 1937.
9. **Guild Chronicle** Christmas 1926 p. 6.
10. Denby, Elizabeth 'Plan the Home' in **Picture Post** vol. 10 no. 1 January 4, 1941 pp. 21—23.

## THE WORK OF A LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY: A PERSONAL VIEW

Through the passing of time the spirit of a place is deepened, while an understanding of this historical dimension lends substance to the fast-changing modern community. People disconnected from their geographical origins often seek new roots and by comprehending their place within the context of a community's history a sense of belonging may be strengthened. This is the spiritual motive behind much local history and the source of its value to a community which exists through its evolution from the past.

A second motive is more academic. Books on national social history cannot be written with confidence until local or personal experiences have been widely understood; alternatively general assumptions about the nature of social change must be tested at local level and thus contribute to the broad historical debate. These motives can be fulfilled by pursuing a third: the desire to preserve and protect material of historical interest and to prevent it from being consigned (as so often) to the bonfire or the bin.

A local history society is the organ through which these ambitions can be carried out. The role of such a history society is twofold; firstly to collect, preserve and organise material, and secondly to set up channels of communication between those with knowledge and those who wish to learn.

In 1981 Sheepscombe History Society was formed. Sheepscombe village straggles for two miles along the sides of a valley twisting into the hills east of Painswick. It now has a population of about 460 and a largely commuting work force with origins outside Gloucestershire, for whom professional and managerial jobs are in the majority. It has a fascinating and often dramatic past involving the ordinary lives of hundreds of working people.

The constitution of the society protects the archives and the artefacts which are being gathered together, and holds the collections for the benefit of the village first and foremost. The society also acts as a forum for debate and communication which are the main functions of the events held during the year. For a few devoted activists and for the benefit of anyone wishing to examine material, a study group meets once a week. The group collects and organises incoming material, attempting to arrange it so that it is available for easy reference; the group also discusses topics of current interest, carries out investigations, answers queries and seeks out valuable sources of information. The collections are held securely in filing cabinets and include a vast number and variety of papers, documents, books, articles, photographs and objects. Extremely precious are the tape-recorded interviews with villagers who have died since the

activities of the society began, containing a mass of information, stories and experience which would otherwise have been lost forever; the tapes also preserve the dialect and personalities of the people involved and can be used for research into many aspects of village life. The recording of interviews with people holding special knowledge before it is too late is an essential activity of a local history society. Interviewing comprises both give and take. The society may take away a treasure trove of information but the experience of discussing the past, of mulling over childhood memories and resurrecting old acquaintances is indeed a pleasure to many elderly people who are usually delighted to be such a great help. In many ways the work of a local history society brings together old villagers and the new, the elderly and the young, helping towards the continuing regeneration of a spirit of community.

People pass on with greater speed than buildings which thereby contain among the stones and woodwork many indications of a long-gone daily life. In village homes modernisation and expansion have always been a source of change — and loss — and adapting to 20th century developments in domestic technology has continued to cut deep into the architecture of other ages. In November 1982 the need for a utility room and a passage way (to a newly converted dining room) required the destruction of two Victorian commercial baker's ovens. The History Society was invited to photograph the ovens in detail before demolition, enabling the system of flues and air vents, the fire grate and warming chambers to be recorded for posterity. The assignment, typical in its value, encouraged documentary and oral research into the origins of the ovens, the family which had worked them and the role of the bakery in the village.

The success of a local history society depends largely upon publicity which raises a broad awareness of its activities. It needs the support of the present community who help with finance, labour and debate, while it is surprising how much material comes to the archives through a strong consciousness of the historical interest felt by present residents. Similarly the function of a local history society is immeasurably enhanced by contributions from people outside the village who have had links with the community in the past, people whose memories and family records have a crucial bearing on village history. By contacting such people the society has gathered some marvellous material; recently for example, the biography of a journalist who lived in Sheepscombe from 1911 to 1923 written by his daughter in New Zealand, a book written by the vicar's wife in the 1860's as a tribute to a young village girl on her death, many fine Victorian portrait photographs and an early 20th century autograph book.

A major feature in establishing a network of contacts was a tea party held in August 1982 for people who had lived in

Sheepscombe before 1939. With the help of members who had lived in the village for fifty years, invitations were sent to every person who could be thought of, living within reasonable travelling distance. The aid of the Gloucestershire press was enlisted and with their imaginative support the event was publicised, reaching many people who had not been heard of for decades. Of similar value was the exhibition mounted by the society as part of the Sheepscombe Festival in August 1983. This event drew back to Sheepscombe many people with a past interest in the village; it also drew attention to the achievements of the society since its inception and underlined its value to the community. Occasional meetings, a twice-yearly news sheet and regular articles in the village magazine help to keep the historical perspective before the village eye, encouraging communication, participation and enthusiasm.

The work load of a local history society can be very heavy as the effect of successful publicity is the steady inflow of material which has to be assessed, organised and stored; it can be an arduous task. But there are exciting discoveries to be made, the element of detective work in research is fun and a challenge, while discussions engendered can be lively. The entire project has many rewards and is a gift to posterity.

ELIZABETH SKINNER