

Charities for the Poor

Pate's Almshouse

In 1574 Richard Pate was granted former chantry lands within the parish in part to support an almshouse which he built at the upper end of the town.¹ The stone building, which stood on the north side of the street opposite Power's Court, contained accommodation for six poor people, and had a small chapel attached to it. A courtyard stood in front of the almshouse, and its grounds extended to the back lane that ran behind the burgages.² The foundation was granted to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, who were required to dedicate three-quarters of the profits of the estate to the management of the school and almshouse, and retain the other quarter for itself.³ In the middle of the middle of the 18th century the almshouses were occupied by 3 men and 3 women, nominated by Pate's heir, who each received about £5 a year.⁴ By the late 18th century, the almshouse was said to have been in a ruinous state for a very long time. In 1811 the College agreed to exchange the almshouse for an alternative site belonging to Thomas Smith on what would become Albion Street.⁵ Griffith apparently approved of the relocation, noting that the almshouse was formerly less comfortably situated opposite the Assembly Rooms.⁶ However, the exchange was the subject of controversy in the 1850s.⁷ The new site was significantly smaller than the previous site, meaning that there was no longer room for the inmates to have their own garden and orchard as they had previously had. Furthermore, although Smith agreed to pay £250 to the College, which was immediately invested to provide an extra income towards the maintenance of the new almshouse, Smith was able to sell the desirable site in the high street for £2,000.⁸ The new almshouse provided accommodation for six elderly women in 1812.⁹

In 1816 the vestry found that the charity had almost wholly failed in recent years, as the college had diverted funds away from its intended purpose.¹⁰ In 1824 a committee appointed to consider the matter recommended that the parish should in future appoint a surveyor to work alongside the agent of the college, and that no new lease should be made unless its terms were approved by the parish. They also demanded that the college make an account of all of the rents and fines it had received from the estate since 1800, and that three-quarters of the total should be applied to improve the charity. A committee was appointed by the vestry in 1843, to monitor the state of the charity's estate. It reported that many of the tenements had been replaced with improved buildings, that other leases recently granted included covenants for the erection of new buildings. The rents had been increased by £227 a year, and a number of other leases would soon also be agreed on improved terms. These, it was stated, were lower than the sums that the vestry

¹CCC, Fe 42/1.

²Goding, Cheltenham, 408

³CCC Archives, Fe 42/1.

⁴Fendley, *Survey of the Diocese of Gloucester, 1735-1750*, 94.

⁵GA D2025/Box 51.

⁶Griffith, *Cheltenham Guide*, p.29.

⁷*Cheltenham Examiner*, 13 & 20 May and 24 Jun. 1857.

⁸Goding, *History of Cheltenham*, 410.

⁹*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 21 May 1812.

¹⁰GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 16 Jan. 1816.

had anticipated in a report of 1822, in part because property in Cheltenham had decreased in value in the intervening 20 years, and in part because of the cost of repairing or replacing the dilapidated premises. Nevertheless, the three-quarters of the income that were reserved for the school and almshouse had increased from £419 to £607 a year, whilst the interest of a fund totalling over £1,300, set aside during the chancery suit, returned another £39 a year in interest. The remaining old leases, which only returned a total of £74 a year, would all expire by 1855, when the vestry anticipated a significant improvement in the charity's finances.¹¹ In 1853 the income of the charity was stated to be £960 per annum.¹² In 1894 the total revenue of the charity estate was said to be over £2,000, three-quarters of which was applied to maintaining the grammar school and the almshouse.¹³ In 1909 the almshouse received £500 from the will of Leslie Gordon Young.¹⁴

In 1894 the 'pension' was described as including the use of two rooms and a garden with 8s. a week per resident.¹⁵ The headmaster of the grammar school was responsible for distributing the weekly dole.¹⁶ The female residents seem to have consistently outnumbered the male¹⁷, and in 1950 the occupants were all female.¹⁸ The Pate's Almshouse Charity was established in 1881, at the same time as the alteration of the governance of the school, and was revised in 1904, 1965 and 1970.¹⁹ In April 2017 the activities of the charity (now Pate's House Charity) were transferred to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.²⁰ A rear block was added in 1987, extending the accommodation.²¹ In 2018 there were 8 individual rented flats.²²

Female Orphan Asylum

The Female Orphan Asylum was established in Winchcombe Street in 1833.²³ It initially provided accommodation for up to 40 girls,²⁴ By the end of the century numbers had dropped to below 30.²⁵ The girls followed a standard elementary school curriculum with the addition of lessons in laundry, cooking and other domestic tasks.²⁶ The majority went into domestic service on leaving. By 1922 the

¹¹GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 7 Sep. 1843.

¹²*Pictorial Hand-book for Cheltenham* (Cheltenham, 1853), p. 39.

¹³*Kelly's Directory* (1894), p. 62.

¹⁴*Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 7 Aug. 1909.

¹⁵*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 21 Apr. 1894.

¹⁶*Gloucestershire Echo*, 29 Dec. 1950.

¹⁷*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 11 March 1899; *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 May 1902. This was apparently common: see M. Rose, 'Crisis of poor relief in England, 1860-1890' in W. J. Mommsen and W. Mock (eds) *Emergence of the Welfare State in Britain and Germany* (London, 1981), pp. 50-70.

¹⁸*Gloucestershire Echo*, 23 Dec. 1950.

¹⁹GA, JR6.24GS.

²⁰Char. Com. Reg. 1172357.

²¹Pate House Charity, *Trustees Report for Year Ended 31 March 2017*.

²²<http://patehousecharity.co.uk/the-property/>.

²³ See Education, School of Industry.

²⁴ *Chelt. Chronicle*, 20 Jan. 1857.

²⁵ *Chelt. Chronicle*, 23 Jan. 1897 & 22 Jan. 1898. *Chelt. Looker-On*, 27 Jan. 1900.

number of girls had dropped to 15.²⁷ As the word asylum was felt to have unhelpful connotations of madness, the name was changed to the Cheltenham Girls' Orphanage.²⁸ Numbers increased slightly in the 1930s,²⁹ and in 1943 there were 35 residents necessitating an appeal for increased resources.³⁰ By 1950 the orphanage, by then renamed Charlotte House, needed considerable maintenance work for which funds were not available and consequently it was closed.³¹

Other Early Charities

Various small bequests to support Cheltenham poor were combined by the vestry in 1667 to purchase a c.15 a. plot known as Poor's Ground.³² By the late 18th century, the land was raising £18 a year.³³ The charity commissioners recommended in 1824 that in future the revenues of the charity should be distributed among the old and the infirm of the parish, and not to 'regular and confirmed paupers', and the recommendation was approved by the vestry.³⁴ In 1828 the charity was worth £62, which was given to recipients in bread or money by the churchwardens on the feast of St Thomas (21 Dec.).³⁵ The poor's ground measured 17 a. in 1858, when it was let for £62 per annum. The net profit from this amounted to c. £50, which was used to produce 230 tickets worth either 2s. 6d. or 5s., redeemable in local shops for food, clothing or coal.³⁶ In 1869 the board of guardians proposed to purchase the poor's ground for the site of a workhouse school. It was calculated that the large sum offered by the board would increase the net income of the charity from £54 a year to c. £80.³⁷ The sale was duly completed in 1870,³⁸ and the receipts of the charity increased to £82 10s. in 1871.³⁹ The income was reported to be £54 11s. 3d in 1894.⁴⁰

John Walwyn left 50s. a year from the manor of Swindon in 1627 for the use of the poor.⁴¹ This generated £2 10s. a year for the poor of the parish.⁴² In 1843 this was distributed on May Day as

²⁶ *Chelt. Looker-On*, 18 Jul. 1914.

²⁷ *Glos. Echo*, 11 Feb. 1922.

²⁸ *Glos. Echo*, 9 Feb. 1924.

²⁹ *Chelt. Chronicle*, 29 Mar. 1930; *Glos. Echo*, 23 Mar. 1938.

³⁰ *Chelt. Chronicle*, 27 Feb. 1943.

³¹ *Glos. Echo*, 10 June 1950; *Birmingham Daily Post*, 1 Nov. 1956.

³² GA, P78/1 CW 3/4; Parsons's Notes, 364

³³ Rudder, *Glos.*, 337.

³⁴ GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 25 Nov. 1824.

³⁵ GA, P78/1 CW 3/4.

³⁶ GA, P78/1 VE 2/6, p. 17.

³⁷ GA, P78/1 VE 2/6, 5 Feb. 1869.

³⁸ GA, P78/1 VE 2/6, 19 Apr. 1870.

³⁹ GA, P78/1 VE 2/6, 11 Apr. 1871.

⁴⁰ *Kelly's Directory* (1894), p. 61.

⁴¹ GA, P78/1 CW 3/4; GDR, V5/73aT; Parsons's Notes, 364

⁴² GA, P78/1 CW 3/4.

payments of 2s. 6d. each to 20 people, many of them elderly widows.⁴³ It was still being distributed in 1894.⁴⁴

In 1742 John Ashmead left an estate in Cheltenham for the relief of poor Baptists in Cheltenham and Tewkesbury, later restricted only to those of Cheltenham. In the middle of the 19th century the estate was worth over £86 a year, besides fines ranging in value from £10 to £150 due at the renewal of leases.⁴⁵

In 1805 John Ballinger bequeathed £100 in bank stock, of which almost half had been left as a legacy by John Darke of Prestbury, to provide £4 a year for the relief of Baptists within Cheltenham.⁴⁶

In 1815 Mrs Williams, née Wells, left £170, awarded to her at Gloucester Assizes in 1782 as damages for a breach of a promise of marriage, to the poor of the parish. The interest was to be distributed each year on 1 March to six poor men and six poor women, all aged 60 or over; half of the recipients were to be members of the parish church, the other half to be drawn from the congregation of Bethel Baptist chapel. In 1843 the profits of the charity amounted to £6 8s. 2d.⁴⁷

The Cheltenham Cobourg Society was founded in 1817 to provide relief to poor married women and their children in the month after childbirth. Recipients of the charity were lent linen, visited each week, and were required to attend a religious service at the end of their confinement, when they were given a shilling.⁴⁸ Two decades later there were three other similar charities operating in the town.⁴⁹ By 1864 the Cheltenham Cobourg Society and Dispensary for the Diseases of Women and Children was established in Bath Street.⁵⁰ The charity was wound up in 1923.⁵¹

The Benevolent and Anti-Mendicity Society was founded by Francis Close in 1827 to relieve the poor of the parish and to discourage vagrancy. Money was collected by donations, subscriptions, and subscriptions at the churches and chapels of the town, and relief was provided in the form of tickets which could be exchanged for coal, bread, clothing, or blankets. The town was divided into districts, with visitors appointed in each, and relief was not to be provided to vagrants, to families who had only recently settled within the town, or to those deemed undeserving. More than £1,000 was raised in support of the charity in 1831, and a total of 11,578 tickets were distributed.⁵² The Dorcas Society was founded in order to provide poor and elderly women with warm clothing at a discounted price.⁵³

⁴³GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 9 Apr. 1844.

⁴⁴*Kelly's Directory* (1894), p. 61.

⁴⁵Goding, *History of Cheltenham*, 435.

⁴⁶Goding, *History of Cheltenham*, 436.

⁴⁷GA, P78/1 CW 3/4; P78/1 VE 2/3, 9 Apr. 1844.

⁴⁸Williams, *New Guide to Cheltenham* (1825), pp. 94–96.

⁴⁹Lee, *New Guide to Cheltenham* (2nd edn., after 1837), pp. 178–81.

⁵⁰*Cheltenham Annuaire* 1864, p. xiv.

⁵¹GA, D2202.

⁵²Davies, *Stranger's Guide to Cheltenham* (1832), pp. 98–99.

⁵³Davies, *Stranger's Guide to Cheltenham* (1832), p. 100.

In 1836 Col. John Ollney bequeathed £8,000 to Cheltenham for the erection of an almshouse in the town. By his will, he directed that it should accommodate ten poor men and eight poor women, all of whom should be over the age of 56, of good character, and not have been in receipt of poor relief for at least seven years previously. The men were each to receive 6s. a week, the women 4s. a week, and all were to receive a new blue outfit each year. The worthiest man and woman were to be appointed master and matron, with an extra stipend of 3s and 2s. 6d. each week respectively. The inmates were to attend worship twice every Sunday. The almshouse was to be administered by the incumbents and churchwardens of the churches of St Mary, St James and St John.⁵⁴ A plot of land on the Tewkesbury Road was purchased in 1846, but the parish had not received the funds bequeathed by Ollney's will in 1849.⁵⁵ The money had still not been received in 1851, when it was thought to be close to being achieved.⁵⁶ The Chancery proceedings to secure the legacy and similar gifts to Gloucester, Tewkesbury and Winchcombe were unsuccessful.⁵⁷

Ives Harvey Urquhart (d. 1850) bequeathed £1,000 in his will to the parish for the provision at Christmas by the churchwardens of clothing to ten poor families who had not received relief from the overseers or Poor Law Union in the previous 12 months.⁵⁸ In 1859 the Urquhart charity produced c. £49, which was used to buy coal and clothing for the poor of the parish.⁵⁹ It was still being distributed annually in 1894.⁶⁰

A committee was appointed by the vestry in 1844 to collect the accounts of the various charities within the parish and to present them to the vestry every year, for the better management and preservation of their funds.⁶¹

The Walker Memorial Fund was established in 1878 in memory of the late rector Dr Edward Walker by his son, Revd James Edward Walker, who vested £2,500 in the corporation as trustees. The fund was to pay annuities to aged and indigent single women or widows who were members of 'the Protestant evangelical denominations', resident in Cheltenham and the neighbourhood, and who had been in domestic service.⁶²

The Cheltenham Charity Organization Society (CCOS) was established in 1879 as the local branch of a national movement "for the purpose of suppressing mendicity and relieving real distress".⁶³ An office was established in Clarence Parade House, through which householders were encouraged to offer work to the unemployed poor.⁶⁴ In 1882 CCOS was instrumental in the establishment of the Cheltenham Cottage Company, which aimed to provide good, sanitary houses for rent by the

⁵⁴TNA, PROB 11/1859/274.

⁵⁵GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 25 Apr. 1848; Goding, *History of Cheltenham*, 431–32.

⁵⁶GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 22 Apr. 1851.

⁵⁷VCH Glos. IV, p. 356.

⁵⁸GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 22 Apr. 1851.

⁵⁹GA, P78/1 VE 2/6, p. 25.

⁶⁰*Kelly's Directory* (1894), p. 61.

⁶¹GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 9 May 1844.

⁶²GA, CBR C2/1/1/1, pp. 127–28.

⁶³*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 16 Sep. 1879 & 4 Oct. 1882.

⁶⁴*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 18 Nov. 1879.

working classes.⁶⁵ The intention was that the provision of better housing for the working poor would have a knock-on effect, enabling the town council to clear the worse slums.⁶⁶ Five houses were built by the company in White Hart Street and 34 in Millbrook Street. In 1883 the properties were rented at 4s. 6d. a week.⁶⁷ By 1901 the rent on most of the properties had dropped to 3s. 6d. a week.⁶⁸

Charities Since 1900

The Hay Trust Fund was established in 1899 by John Alexander Hay (d. 1900) and his wife Marianne Louisa Hay (d. 1901) for the provision of almshouses for aged or infirm parishioners of Cheltenham.⁶⁹ The object of this charity was 'to provide a home for aged and infirm persons who would otherwise be probably compelled to end their days in the union workhouse.' The rules stated that either sex could be admitted, single or remarried, were to live in the parish of Cheltenham and 'on no account were able-bodied to be elected to the Homes.'⁷⁰ The initial provision was for 10 cottage homes, for which John Alexander Hay bequeathed £2,000 to the Mayor and Corporation for their construction and a further £3,000 for maintenance.⁷¹ In 1903 plans were agreed for a further two cottages.⁷²

In 1900 Septimus Redhead, a Tyneside civil engineer who spent his last years in Cheltenham, left the residue of his estate, £15,947 1s. 7d. to be held in trust by the mayor and aldermen, with the income distributed among a number of named local charities.⁷³ In 1901 John William Ormond Howes, a retired pork butcher, left the bulk of his estate to Cheltenham General Hospital, the bequest amounting to £11, 456 16s. 8d.⁷⁴ In 1902 Mrs Disney Thorp left £5,000 to Cheltenham General Hospital and £5,000 to St Mary's and St Matthew's.⁷⁵

In 1908 Leslie Gordon Young, who died aged 22, bequeathed the residue of his estate to trustees for charitable purposes in Cheltenham.⁷⁶ This provided a fund of over £30,000, which provided grants of between £100 and £2,000 for a number of school, hospital and other charities.⁷⁷ In addition an annuity of £1,500 for his nurse passed to Cheltenham General Hospital on her death.⁷⁸

⁶⁵*Cheltenham Examiner*, 8 Nov. 1882.

⁶⁶*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 6 Nov. 1883.

⁶⁷*Cheltenham Examiner*, 24 Oct. 1883.

⁶⁸*Cheltenham Examiner*, 22 May 1901.

⁶⁹GA, CBR C3/3/5/9/4; *Gloucestershire Echo*, 2 Aug. 1899.

⁷⁰GA, CBR C3/3/5/1/2, Deed of Trust, 1 September 1899.

⁷¹*The Times*, 14 Dec. 1900

⁷²GA, D5587/box 9616; *The Building News*, 19 Aug. 1904.

⁷³*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 10 Feb. 1900.

⁷⁴*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 26 Jan. 1901 & 18 Jan. 1902.

⁷⁵*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 12 April 1902.

⁷⁶*Gloucestershire Echo*, 28 Oct. 1908.

⁷⁷*Gloucestershire Echo*, 5 Aug. 1909.

⁷⁸*Gloucestershire Echo*, 5 Nov. 1908.

The Caroline Strickland Homes were established in 1911 under the terms of the will of Elizabeth Standish⁷⁹, in honour of her sister who had died the previous year.⁸⁰ Work on building the five houses in Hales Road began in 1914.⁸¹ In July 1914 W. H. Horsley, trustee of the Strickland Cottage Homes, offered to gift the council a recreation ground for the East Ward and a block of cottage homes on 6 ½ acres of freehold land on the south side of Battledown Lawn with a frontage on Hales Road.⁸² Following opposition from local residents, the offer was withdrawn.⁸³

The Sunset Home for Aged People was established following the bequest from Miss Maria Louisa Voile, who died in May 1913.⁸⁴ The home at 3 Monson Avenue provided accommodation for 8 pensioners.⁸⁵ Within a short period CCOS was reporting that the endowment was insufficient.⁸⁶ In 1938 Miss Augusta Louisa Green left the residue of her estate, around £12,000 to CCOS.⁸⁷ The Monson Avenue property was then sold and the home moved to 3 Carlton Street.⁸⁸

In 1922 a trust fund set up under the terms of the will of Henry David Gregory Chambers of Croydon invited the submission of schemes for the creation of almshouses, to be named in honour of his sister.⁸⁹ CCOS secured the funding for 10 houses to be built in Tennyson Road.⁹⁰ The residents were required to be protestants over the age of 63.⁹¹ The Jesse Mary Chambers almshouses were opened by Cheltenham's MP on 10 July 1925.⁹²

In 1943 Walter Turner Long, secretary to the Cheltenham Education Committee, left a bequest for the purpose of granting annuities for single women and widows of over 50 years of age.⁹³

In July 1969 CCOS was renamed the Cheltenham Family Welfare Association (CFWA).⁹⁴ In 2011 management of the Hay Trust Fund, Caroline Strickland Homes, Turner Long Fund and Walker Memorial Trust was taken over by CFWA.⁹⁵

⁷⁹*Gloucestershire Echo*, 1 Nov. 1911.

⁸⁰*Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 Jun. 1910.

⁸¹*Gloucestershire Echo*, 7 July 1914.

⁸²CBC Minutes, 6 Jul. 1914.

⁸³CBC Minutes, 31 Jul. & 25 Aug. 1914.

⁸⁴*London Gazette*, 28 Nov. 1913

⁸⁵*Cheltenham Looker-On*, 1 Apr. 1916

⁸⁶*Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 Mar. 1918

⁸⁷*Gloucestershire Echo*, 19 Nov. 1938

⁸⁸*Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 June 1940

⁸⁹*Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 Oct. 1922

⁹⁰GA, D5587/box 9625; *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 Jul. 1925

⁹¹*Gloucestershire Echo*, 28 May 1925.

⁹²*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 18 Jul. 1925.

⁹³*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 18 Mar/ 1944

⁹⁴GA D2465

⁹⁵CBC Minutes, 12 Dec. 2011.

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