

Communications

Roads

Cheltenham lies on routes connecting the upper Severn Vale with the Cotswolds to the east and Midlands to the north. Several major ancient routes passed nearby, including the Fosse Way, White Way and Salt Way, and the town was linked into this important network of roads by more local, minor routes. Cheltenham may have been joined to the Salt Way running from Droitwich to Lechlade¹ by Saleweistrete,² or by the old coach road to London, the Cheltenham end of which was known as Greenway Lane;³ the White Way running north from Cirencester passed through Sandford.⁴

The medieval settlement of Cheltenham was largely ranged along a single high street running south-east and north-west, with its church and manorial complex adjacent to the south, and burgage plots (some still traceable in modern boundaries) running back from both frontages.⁵ Documents produced in the course of administering the liberty of Cheltenham refer to the *via regis*, the king's highway, which is likely to be a reference to this public road running through the liberty.⁶ Other forms include 'the royal way at *Herstret*' and 'the royal way in the way of Cheltenham' (*in via de Cheltenham*). Infringements recorded upon the *via regis* included digging and ploughing, obstruction with timbers and dungheaps, the growth of trees and building of houses.⁷

The most important local roads were those running from Cheltenham to Gloucester, and Cheltenham to Winchcombe, where the liberty administrators were frequently engaged in defending their lords' rights. Leland described the roads around Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury as 'subject to al sodeyne risings of Syverne, so that aftar reignes it is very foule to

¹W.S. Baddeley, *Place-Names of Gloucestershire: a handbook* (1913), 133–4.

²DC, MR/GC3, m. 3d.

³J. Sawyer, 'On Some Ancient Roads on the Cotswolds', *Trans. BGAS*, 20 (1895–7), 251

⁴J. Sawyer, 'On Some Ancient Roads on the Cotswolds', *Trans. BGAS*, 20 (1895–7), 251–2.

⁵Verey and Brooks, *Glos.* II, 226.

⁶This is unlikely to be a reference to the Fosse Way, although that was occasionally known by this name: A. Cooper, 'The Rise and Fall of the Anglo-Saxon Law of the Highway', *Haskins Society Journal* 12 (2003), 61.

⁷DC, MR/GC1, mm. 1, 2, 7d; MR/GC2, mm. 1d–2d, 5; MR/GC3, m. 3d; MR/GC8; TNA, SC 2/175/27.

traveyl'.⁸ William Greville of Cheltenham in 1513,⁹ and John Fawkenor of Gloucester in 1545 both left bequests for repairing the road between their two towns.¹⁰

The medieval pattern of communications persisted into the early modern period. Settlement in the town was restricted to its single street aligned with the river Chelt. At the western end of the parish, this road crossed the Chelt at Barbridge and ran south-west to Gloucester. Another route continued north-west through Swindon to Tewkesbury. At its south-east end, the high street continued as a road through Charlton Kings and climbed the Cotswold Edge to meet the road from Birdlip to Northleach and Burford. Other routes ran south from this road, across Charlton Kings and Leckhampton towards Birdlip and Cirencester. Another road ran south from the high street across the fields towards Badgeworth and Birdlip. A road leading north from the high street to Prestbury and Winchcombe was regarded in 1675 as the principal route connecting Gloucester with Coventry and the south Midlands.¹¹ The road to Tewkesbury was the subject of a turnpike act in 1726,¹² but the scheme was allowed to expire without opposition.¹³ A new Act was passed in 1756, which made no mention of previous Act, which put the road to Tewkesbury under the administration of a trust. Two additional roads were added to the scheme at this time, one leaving Cheltenham via Hewletts and making the steep climb up Dowdswell Hill through Whittington to the Burford road near Puesdown Ash, the other travelling through Cobberley to the Tetbury road to the west of Cirencester.¹⁴ The scheme was renewed in 1774,¹⁵ and again in 1785,¹⁶ when the roads were taken from the original trust and vested in a separate Cheltenham turnpike trust. A new route along the valley of the river Chelt and past Dowdswell Court to the Kilkenny inn in Lower Dowdswell replaced the older route up Dowdswell Hill. Another road, to Painswick and Bath, was also added to the

⁸J. Leland, *Itinerary* (ed. Toulmin Smith), II, 56–7.

⁹TNA, PROB 11/17/358.

¹⁰*Calendar of Records of the Corporation of Gloucester*, 436.

¹¹J. Ogilby, *Britannia*, vol. 1, pl. 70.

¹²12 Geo. I, c. 18.

¹³VCH Glos. 8, pp. 115-6.

¹⁴29 Geo. II, c. 51.

¹⁵14 Geo. III, c. 111.

¹⁶25 Geo. III, c. 125.

scheme at this time. The trust was renewed in 1806,¹⁷ and again in 1824.¹⁸ At that time, the trust administered the Tewkesbury road from Piff's Elm, the London road through Dowdswell, the new Bath road through Cambray to Birdlip, the road to Prestbury and Winchcombe, and the road to Hewletts, remnant of the original road up Dowdswell Hill. In 1831 the old Bath Road to Leckhampton, and the back road on the north side of the high street, were also turnpike.¹⁹ The tolls were let to several farmers, and were worth over £4,000 a year in the 1820s.²⁰ By 1848 the total revenue of the trust was £3,260,²¹ but these had declined significantly by 1853, when the tolls for the Uckington gate were worth half what they had been worth a decade earlier.²²

A separate trust was established by an Act of 1756 to improve the road between Cheltenham and Gloucester, following a petition by the Corporation of Gloucester.²³ This was renewed in 1778,²⁴ and again 1798,²⁵ before a new Act of 1809 authorised the creation of a more direct route from Staverton Bridge to the Fleece on the high street.²⁶ The route was modified in 1825,²⁷ and an Act of 1828 authorised the creation of a branch road to connect the Gloucester road with the fashionable district of Montpellier.²⁸ The increased traffic between Cheltenham and Gloucester as the spa increased in popularity is reflected in the rising revenues from the tolls. In 1778 the tolls were let for £162 a year,²⁹ which had risen to £390 in 1799.³⁰ The annual rent of the tolls had reach over £1,000 in 1819, and they peaked at almost £1,600 in 1825, before declining again. The rent had recovered to £2,000 for a 15-month term in 1837, but the opening of the railway

¹⁷46 Geo. III, c. 137.

¹⁸5 Geo. IV, c. 100.

¹⁹1 & 2 Wil. IV, c. 16.

²⁰GA, D2025/Box 133, Bundle 3.

²¹GA, D1950/Z10.

²²GA, D2025/Box 133, Bundle 3.

²³29 Geo. II, c. 58; *VCH Glos. IV*, pp. 128-9.

²⁴18 Geo. III, c. 102.

²⁵38 Geo. III, c. 12.

²⁶49 Geo. III, c. 29.

²⁷6 Geo. IV, c. 147.

²⁸9 Geo. IV, c. 9.

²⁹GA, D204/1/1.

³⁰GA, D204/1/2.

to Gloucester in 1840 caused the farmer to resign the lease, and the trustees struggled to let the tolls.³¹ By 1849 they were worth just £490.³²

A new more direct route to Evesham via Bishops Cleeve was authorised by an Act of Parliament in 1810,³³ which created a new trust to administer the road,³⁴ renewed in 1824,³⁵ and again in 1831.³⁶

In 1846 Coltham Lane, an ancient lane which ran along the border between Cheltenham and Charlton Kings, was widened and improved. The surveyor of the highways observed that the road was too narrow to be of use, and was made extremely filthy through the deposits of the sewers of adjacent buildings. The proposal to raise, widen and improve the road was enthusiastically adopted by the vestry, who anticipated the benefits to the town of creating 'a beautiful open road, either for traffic or for pleasure' which, once connected with Bouncers Lane, would create a carriage road of 8 miles in length without a turnpike, and greatly improve communications for both residents and visitors to the town.³⁷ The road, renamed Hales Road after the surveyor, was completed and opened in 1847.³⁸

When the Ministry of Transport classified roads in 1922, four primary routes passed through Cheltenham: the A40 from London to Fishguard, the A46 from Bath to Grimsby, the A435 from Cirencester to Birmingham and the A4019 from Cheltenham to Coombe Hill providing a link with the A38 Plymouth to Derby. With the passing of the Trunk Roads Act 1936 the A40 came under the control of the Minister of Transport.³⁹ A new road to replace the existing route of the A40 between Cheltenham and Gloucester was included in the Local Development Plan in 1950⁴⁰, although the dual carriageway Golden Valley bypass did not open until 1969.⁴¹ The Gloucester-Cheltenham section of

³¹GA, D204/1/2.

³²GA, D204/1/3.

³³50 Geo. III, c. 2; GA, D1302/2/2.

³⁴GA, D1302/5/1.

³⁵5 Geo. IV, c. 140.

³⁶1 Geo. IV, c. 18.

³⁷GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 3 Oct. 1846.

³⁸Hodsdon, *Gazetteer*.

³⁹1936 c. 5, *Trunk Roads Act 1936*, First Schedule.

⁴⁰CBR C5/4/3/1/1.

⁴¹GA K1972, K882/3.

the M5 motorway opened west of the town in 1971 with a junction onto the A40 and restricted access from the A4019.⁴²

Tramroad and Railways [by David Aldred]

The Gloucester and Cheltenham tramroad was authorised in 1809 to provide a link from Gloucester quays to Cheltenham.⁴³ It was nine miles in length and passed into Cheltenham parish at Staverton Bridge on the route of the present B4063. The line terminated in the town near the junction of Market Street (then known as Knapp Road) and Gloucester Road, to the west of the town centre. A three mile branch to the quarries on Leckhampton Hill diverged from the mainline at the junction of Queen's Road and Gloucester Road. The branch from Leckhampton opened on 2 July 1810⁴⁴ followed by the opening of the main line from Gloucester on 4 June 1811, when stone from the Leckhampton quarries and coal from Gloucester were carried to the terminus, where the company also had its depôt.⁴⁵ Traffic expanded after the Cheltenham Gas Company obtained an act for its gasworks to the west of the terminus in 1819.⁴⁶ In the same year the turnpike trustees established a wharf for storing and breaking its road stone from Bristol and Chepstow⁴⁷ off Market Street, adjoining Saint Mary's cemetery (now Churchill Gardens).⁴⁸ A further wharf for stone (Grotten's wharf) was laid down between Grafton Road and Painswick Road, straddling the boundary with Leckhampton parish.⁴⁹ This replaced an earlier wharf upon which Great Norwood Street had been built by 1820.⁵⁰

In 1838 26,215 tons of coal, 6,897 tons of road stone and 2,762 tons of other goods were recorded being carried on the main line with 22,938 tons of stone being carried on the Leckhampton branch and the profit amounted to £2379.⁵¹ The subsequent arrival of railways brought the demise

⁴²Somerset Archives, A\BXIB/2/2/2.

⁴³49 Geo III cap 23; GA Q/RUm/26.

⁴⁴Cheltenham Chronicle, 5 July 1810.

⁴⁵Cheltenham Chronicle, 4 June 1811.

⁴⁶59 Geo III 1819.

⁴⁷GA CBR/B2/10/2/10.

⁴⁸D.E. Bick, *The Gloucester & Cheltenham Tramroad* (Abingdon, 1987), 25; GA CBR/B2/9/5/1 *Cheltenham Old Town Survey 1855-57* Sheet 36.

⁴⁹*Cheltenham OTS 1855-57* Sheet 79.

⁵⁰Bick, *Glouc & Chelt Tramroad*, 27.

⁵¹'Statement of the gross Tonnages, Receipts and Expenses, and net Revenue of the Gloucester and Cheltenham Tramroad for the Year 1838', quoted in Bick, *Glouc & Chelt Tramroad*, 54.

of the tramroad. In 1840 it came under the control of the Birmingham and Gloucester railway company which was absorbed by the Midland Railway in 1845; the same year that the Great Western Railway took a half share in it.⁵² By 1858 the six monthly profits had fallen to £54.⁵³ The railway companies obtained an act to abandon the tramroad on 1 August 1859.⁵⁴ Alternative provision was made for bringing in coal and road stone by the building of a wharf on the Midland Railway at the Tewkesbury Road bridge in November 1860.⁵⁵ The tramroad's rails, weighing machines and office furniture were sold on 19 April 1861⁵⁶ and the depôt at Cheltenham on 9 July 1861.⁵⁷ A short length from Leckhampton quarries to the Malvern Inn on the Leckhampton Road in Leckhampton parish survived until the 1890s.⁵⁸

The need to improve the transportation of heavy goods, especially coal, to Cheltenham from the River Severn led to the opening of a three mile canal from the river at Wainlodes in the parish of Deerhurst to Coombe Hill in the parish of Leigh in 1795.⁵⁹ It ended five miles from the town but attempts to build a tramroad to Cheltenham, to forestall the proposed Gloucester and Cheltenham tramroad in 1807,⁶⁰ and to lengthen the canal to Prestbury Road in the town in 1810⁶¹ and to Alstone in 1844⁶² came to nothing. For much of its life it was leased out, mostly to other canal companies.⁶³ In 1816 traffic amounted to 1543 tons of unspecified merchandise⁶⁴ and in the mid 1830s half of Cheltenham's coal was said to be still supplied by the canal⁶⁵ but competition from railways led to its

⁵²Ibid. 32, 36-7.

⁵³Ibid. 56.

⁵⁴GA CBR/B2/10/2/10.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.; *Cheltenham Examiner*, 24 April 1861.

⁵⁷Ibid. 3 July 1861.

⁵⁸Bick, *Glouc & Chelt Tramroad*, 76.

⁵⁹32 Geo III cap. 83. For more details of the canal, VCH VIII, 71.

⁶⁰GA Q/RUm/20.

⁶¹GA Q/RUm/43/1.

⁶²GA Q/RUm/184/2.

⁶³C.Hadfield, *The Canals of the West Midlands* 3rd edition (Newton Abbot, 1985), 147-49.

⁶⁴GA D1245/E19.

⁶⁵GA D2025/Box 129/Bundle 2.

sale in June 1871.⁶⁶ Attempts to revive traffic were unsuccessful and legal abandonment came in 1876⁶⁷, despite opposition from the River Severn Commissioners.⁶⁸

Cheltenham's first railway station was opened by the standard gauge Birmingham and Gloucester railway company on 24 June 1840.⁶⁹ At first trains ran only to Bromsgrove but trains to Gloucester began on 4 November 1840⁷⁰ and to Curzon Street station in Birmingham on 14 August 1841.⁷¹ The station was designed by Samuel Daukes⁷² with its main entrance through an impressive Doric colonnade, demolished in 1961⁷³ leaving one half column surviving. A direct route to the town centre, over a mile away, was created by the building of Queen's Road along the line of the Gloucester and Cheltenham Tramroad.⁷⁴ In April 1841 the company announced it was open for goods traffic⁷⁵ and from February 1844 that it was also open for general merchandise.⁷⁶ In 1841 the company built a coal wharf to the north of the Tewkesbury Road with the intention of bringing Staffordshire coal to the town, it being cheaper than coal from the Forest of Dean.⁷⁷ By 1842 a second coal wharf had been established on Alstone Lane.⁷⁸ The railway's arrival was not met with wholehearted enthusiasm; the Reverend Francis Close led a vociferous but ultimately unsuccessful campaign against Sunday trains.⁷⁹ The Birmingham and Gloucester Railway was absorbed into the Midland Railway in August 1846.⁸⁰

⁶⁶GA D1245/E22.

⁶⁷GA D2460/2/2/5/6.

⁶⁸GA RR185.4GS.

⁶⁹*Cheltenham Examiner*, 24 June 1840.

⁷⁰*Ibid.* 4 November 1840.

⁷¹P.J.Long and Rev.W.V.Awdry, *The Birmingham & Gloucester Railway* (Gloucester, 1987), 294.

⁷²H.Davies, *The Stranger's Guide* (Cheltenham, 1843), 165.

⁷³*Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 January 1961.

⁷⁴Long and Awdry, *Birm & Glouc Railway*, 219; *Cheltenham OTS 1855-57* Sheets 50,59,60.

⁷⁵*Gloucester Journal*, 17 April 1841.

⁷⁶*Cheltenham Examiner*, 17 January 1844.

⁷⁷Long and Awdry, *Birm & Glouc Railway*, 220; *Cheltenham OTS 1855-57* Sheet 11.

⁷⁸*Ibid.* 220; *Ibid.* Sheet 34.

⁷⁹*Cheltenham Examiner*, 24 May 1843, 14 February 1844.

⁸⁰9&10 Vic., cap. 326; GA, Q/RUa/5.

The demand for a direct link to London led to the passing of the Cheltenham and Great Western Union Railway Act in 1836 to build a line from the broad gauge Great Western Railway at Swindon via Gloucester.⁸¹ Progress was slow and the line reached Cirencester in May 1841, from where coaches ran to and from Cheltenham to connect with every train, taking two hours for the journey.⁸² In July 1843 the CGWUR was taken over by the GWR,⁸³ which obtained an act in 1844 to build a line from the Birmingham and Gloucester Company's route at Lansdown Bridge to a terminus in Jessop's Gardens on the western side of St James' Square near the centre of the town.⁸⁴ The broad gauge GWR reached Gloucester in May 1845 and work then started on laying a third rail alongside the existing Birmingham and Gloucester line to Cheltenham.⁸⁵ St James station opened on part of the Jessop's Gardens site on 23 October 1847, served by ten trains to London each weekday.⁸⁶ By 1855 there had developed a goods station and extensive sidings.⁸⁷ Thus by 1852 Cheltenham was served by two stations belonging to two different railway companies.

Cheltenham's railways continued to develop in the second half of the 19th century as more lines were built and the existing provision was enlarged. In 1861 two railway bills laid before parliament were turned down. The bill for a Cheltenham to Bourton on the Water railway planned a line to meet the railhead at the latter place, which was linked to the Oxford to Worcester line at Chipping Norton Junction (later re-named Kingham). This bill was turned down by parliament in February 1861.⁸⁸ The second bill, for the East Gloucestershire Railway to link the town to existing railways at both Faringdon and Witney, via the valley of the river Coln, to provide shorter routes to London, was quickly revived and an act was passed on 29 July 1864.⁸⁹ The company was based in Cheltenham, holding its early biannual meetings at The Plough Hotel in the High Street. On 31 March 1865 an elaborate procession left there for a field near Charlton Park to the east of the town to cut the first

⁸¹6 William IV, cap. 77; GA, Q/RUm/146.

⁸²*Cheltenham Examiner*, 2 June 1841.

⁸³ E.T.McDermot (revised C.R.Clinker), *History of the the Great Western Railway, Vol. I 1833-63* (London, 1964), 85.

⁸⁴7&8 Vic., cap. 3; GA, Q/RUm/180.

⁸⁵*Cheltenham Examiner*, 14 May 1845.

⁸⁶*Cheltenham Looker On*, 23 October 1845.

⁸⁷*Cheltenham OTS 1855-57* Sheet 44.

⁸⁸*Cheltenham Examiner*, 20 February 1861.

⁸⁹27&28 Vic., cap. 285; GA, Q/RUm/322.

sod.⁹⁰ Two months later a hundred tons of construction material were delivered to a dépôt set up at the coal wharf in Alstone Lane⁹¹ and in September members of the Town Committee descended a tunnel shaft near Whittington, where earthworks had already begun.⁹² Land had been acquired in and to the south of Cheltenham but ongoing objections from a section of the town's middle classes, shortage of funds and uncertainties about connections with the Great Western Railway and Midland Railway in Cheltenham led to a decision by the company in March 1869 to concentrate on the eastern end.⁹³ The line from Witney to Fairford was opened on 15 January 1873 and there it stalled;⁹⁴ the company being described as 'defunct' two months later.⁹⁵ In May 1876 the tunnel was said to be waterlogged and too dangerous to enter and the cuttings leading to it had collapsed inwards.⁹⁶ By March 1879 its land in Cheltenham had been sold off for £4500⁹⁷ and much of its planned route from Andoversford had been taken over for the route of the Banbury and Cheltenham Direct Railway,⁹⁸ which in 1891 was still paying an annual rental of £454 to the East Gloucestershire Railway.⁹⁹ Of the twenty proposed railway schemes into Cheltenham,¹⁰⁰ the East Gloucestershire Railway was the only one for which land was purchased and construction started.

In 1872 a second bill for a line to connect Cheltenham to Bourton on the Water, via Andoversford, put forward as the Banbury and Cheltenham Direct Railway, was successful.¹⁰¹ The first sod was cut on 17 February 1875¹⁰² but progress was slow and trains did not start running into

⁹⁰*Cheltenham Examiner*, 5 April 1865.

⁹¹*Ibid.* 17 May 1865.

⁹²*Ibid.* 20 September 1865.

⁹³*Ibid.* 31 March 1869.

⁹⁴*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 21 January 1873.

⁹⁵*Ibid.* 11 March 1873.

⁹⁶*Ibid.* 16 May 1876.

⁹⁷GA, D2455/B4/1/1

⁹⁸GA, Q/RUm/322.

⁹⁹GA, D2455/B4/1/1.

¹⁰⁰E. Miller, 'Railway Mania in Cheltenham: Part One', *Cheltenham Local History Journal* 26 (2010), 14.

¹⁰¹36&37 Vic., cap. 172; GA, Q/RUm/390.

¹⁰²*Cheltenham Examiner*, 17 February 1875.

St James station until 1 June 1881.¹⁰³ The line was worked by the Great Western Railway for fifty per cent of gross receipts¹⁰⁴ until 1897 when the GWR took complete control.¹⁰⁵

During these years St James station had undergone considerable change. In May 1872 the broad gauge had been converted to standard gauge¹⁰⁶ and in September 1894 a much enlarged station fronting onto St James' Square itself was opened with a large decorated portico to protect passengers arriving by road. It comprised four platforms, a large goods shed, sidings, cattle pens and dock and a turntable to turn the locomotives. Some of the sidings were built on the site of the earlier station. The rebuilding had cost over £14,000.¹⁰⁷

The Midland Railway route through Lansdown station also expanded in the second half of the 19th century. In November 1860 a wharf was being built to the south of the Tewkesbury Road, primarily for bringing to the town coal and stone consequent on the demise of the Gloucester and Cheltenham tramroad.¹⁰⁸ In September 1862 the company opened High Street station which adjoined these sidings.¹⁰⁹ Eight years later there were proposals to develop this site as the passenger station for the town and relegate Lansdown station to a goods depôt, but nothing came of this.¹¹⁰ An iron works was established c.1864 immediately north of Lansdown station on the west side of the railway.¹¹¹ As the works developed an extensive network of sidings was set up by 1883, complete with turntables for ease of access into the buildings.¹¹² By 1921 this had been truncated to a short

¹⁰³Ibid. 1 June 1881.

¹⁰⁴*Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 June 1893.

¹⁰⁵Ibid. 22 May 1897.

¹⁰⁶*Cheltenham Examiner*, 29 May 1872.

¹⁰⁷*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 15 September 1894; OS 25 inch Gloucestershire sheet xxvi.7 Revised 1901 Published 1903.

¹⁰⁸GA, CBR/B2/10/2/10.

¹⁰⁹*Cheltenham Examiner*, 3 September 1862.

¹¹⁰Ibid. 23 February 1870.

¹¹¹J.Waller, *A Chronology of Trade and Industry in Cheltenham* (Cheltenham, 2002), 3.

¹¹²Shown as Central Works on OS 25 inch Gloucestershire xxvi.7 Surveyed 1883 Published 1887.

siding.¹¹³ Immediately to the north of Lansdown station on the east side, the company developed a goods yard which was expanded with the arrival of the Midland and South Western Junction Railway in August 1891.¹¹⁴ Four years later that railway obtained running powers northwards up to the Tewkesbury Road where it then built its own sidings and engine shed,¹¹⁵ the latter closing in 1936.¹¹⁶ The MR supported the MSWJR as it provided direct access from the Midlands and North to the south coast, particularly the port of Southampton.

The origins of the Midland and South Western Junction Railway dated back to 1881 when an act had been passed for the Swindon and Cheltenham Extension Railway to link the Swindon, Marlborough and Andover Railway to Cheltenham.¹¹⁷ Three years later the two companies merged to form the MSWJR.¹¹⁸ For much of its life the company experienced financial difficulties and when it reached Cheltenham it was in receivership until improving traffic prospects lifted it out of that state in 1897.¹¹⁹ For the eight miles into the town from Andoversford it had running powers over the Great Western Railway's Banbury to Cheltenham line.¹²⁰ To accommodate the potential increased passenger traffic at Cheltenham, Lansdown station was enlarged by the provision of a two bay platform, although some MSWJR trains ran into the main line platforms to enable through Midland Railway carriages to run to and from Southampton.¹²¹ A second attempt to turn the Tewkesbury Road station into Cheltenham's main passenger station for the two companies in 1890 failed to materialise.¹²² In 1897 the Cheltenham Gas Company built a half mile siding from the goods yards there to supply coal to its works on the corner of Tewkesbury Road and Gloucester Road.¹²³ During

¹¹³OS 25 inch Gloucestershire sheet xxvi.7 Revised 1920 to 1921 Published 1923.

¹¹⁴C.G.Maggs, *The Midland & South Western Junction Railway* (Newton Abbot, 1967), 44.

¹¹⁵53&54 Vic., cap. 212; *Cheltenham Chronicle* 31 August 1895; OS 25 inch Gloucestershire sheets xxvi.3 and xxvi.7 Revised 1901 Published 1903.

¹¹⁶Maggs, *MSWJR*, 107.

¹¹⁷45&46 Vic., cap. 146; GA, Q/RUm/434 and Q/RUm/457.

¹¹⁸47&48 Vic., cap. 164.

¹¹⁹*Gloucestershire Echo*, 1 September 1897.

¹²⁰Maggs, *MSWJR*, 42.

¹²¹*Ibid.* 40; OS 25 inch Gloucestershire sheet xxvi.7 Revised 1901 Published 1903.

¹²²*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 23 August 1890.

¹²³GA, D2015/7310/Bundle 4.

the first world war many troop and hospital trains ran through Cheltenham, using the MSWJR to reach the camps on Salisbury Plain and the port of Southampton.¹²⁴

The last major railway development affecting Cheltenham took place early in the 20th century. In August 1899 the Great Western Railway gained royal assent for a bill to construct a line from Birmingham to Bristol to compete with the existing Midland Railway main line,¹²⁵ although south of Gloucester the GWR had to obtain running powers over its competitor's main line. The proposals entailed a completely new route between Honeybourne in Worcestershire to the original GWR line running into St James station. Large-scale earthworks were constructed within the borough; more than sixty houses were demolished between Market Street and Swindon Road to the west of the town centre.¹²⁶ In order to re-house these people the GWR built forty six model houses in Alstone Avenue, twelve of which were ready to be occupied by March 1905, but there were reported complaints that the rental of £16 per annum was too high for the displaced families.¹²⁷ Over four hundred graves were removed from the old cemetery in Market Street (on the site of Churchill Gardens).¹²⁸ The original plan to build a loop line from the north into St James station was abandoned when Cheltenham corporation demanded too much compensation for the loss of part of Alstone baths.¹²⁹ As a result a through station was constructed at Malvern Road on land bought from the Ladies' College, where sidings, a coaling stage and an engine shed were built; the latter replacing an earlier engine shed immediately south of St George's Road, demolished in the construction of the line.¹³⁰ The railway company was compelled to build a six foot high fence on the

¹²⁴Maggs, *MSWJR*, 86.

¹²⁵62&63 Vic., cap. 58.

¹²⁶GA, Q/RUm/538.

¹²⁷*Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucester Graphic*, 11 March 1905.

¹²⁸*Ibid.* 11 March 1905.

¹²⁹GA, Q/RUm/555; *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 25 February 1905.

¹³⁰*Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucester Graphic*, 22 December 1906; OS 25 inch Gloucestershire sheet xxvi.7 Revised 1901 Published 1903.

east side of the site to prevent the railway navvies spying on the young ladies of the College when they were at play.¹³¹ This new route from Birmingham opened to goods on 9 December 1907 and to passengers on 1 July 1908, with a through daily express from Wolverhampton to Bristol and return, except Sunday.¹³² Faced with this competition on its Birmingham to Bristol route, the Midland Railway placed advertisements in the local papers advertising improved services.¹³³ From 1 August 1906 a local service of rail motors ran from St James station to Honeybourne in Worcestershire, reversing at the Malvern Road junction until the station was opened, when they called and reversed there.¹³⁴ On 20 May 1908 a small two platform halt was opened where the line crossed above Cheltenham High Street.¹³⁵ This closed due to wartime economies on 30 April 1917 and was never reopened.¹³⁶ For similar reasons Malvern Road station was closed in January 1917 but reopened in July 1929.¹³⁷

Improvements took place on the line between Cheltenham and Andoversford in the early years of the 20th century. By October 1902 the track had been doubled by the Great Western Railway at the request of the Midland and South Western Junction Railway¹³⁸ and in July 1905 the GWR opened a southern loop from this line at Hatherley junction for traffic between South Wales and the North East. Passenger trains started using this loop on 1 May 1906¹³⁹ with a Cardiff to Newcastle service

¹³¹*Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucester Graphic*, 25 November 1905.

¹³²McDermot, *History of the the GWR*, 231-2.

¹³³For example, *Cheltenham Examiner*, 2 July 1908.

¹³⁴*Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucester Graphic*, 4 August 1906.

¹³⁵*Cheltenham Examiner*, 20 May 1908.

¹³⁶M.Oakley, *Gloucestershire Railway Stations* (Wimborne, 2003), 39.

¹³⁷*Ibid.* 42.

¹³⁸Maggs, *MSWJR*, 58; *Cheltenham Examiner*, 1 October 1902.

¹³⁹*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 1 May 1906.

which continued until 1939, except for the period of the first world war.¹⁴⁰ These trains called only at Leckhampton station, which was then re-named Cheltenham South and Leckhampton.¹⁴¹

At the railway grouping in 1923 the Midland and South Western Junction Railway was taken over by the Great Western Railway and the Midland Railway was absorbed into the London Midland and Scottish Railway.¹⁴² In 1929 the GWR chose the weekday Cheltenham Spa Express to London Paddington to attempt to claim the world record for the fastest timetabled train by covering the seventy seven miles from Swindon to Paddington in eighty five minutes.¹⁴³ On 6 June 1932 the train averaged over 80mph which at that time was the world record.¹⁴⁴ The service ceased early in the second world war¹⁴⁵ but the war generally brought increased traffic to the railways running through Cheltenham. Troop trains and hospital trains travelled to and from Southampton as in the first world war. In response to the increased traffic on the joint GWR-LMS route to Gloucester, the track was quadrupled in 1942¹⁴⁶ and the engine shed at Malvern Road doubled in size by the addition of an open building with a corrugated asbestos roof.¹⁴⁷ By the end of the war in 1945 Cheltenham's railways were at their most extensive.

Cheltenham's railways have contracted since 1945 largely as a result of road competition for both passengers and goods. Most of the contraction of passenger traffic took place before the publication of the Beeching Report: The Reshaping of British Railways. Today only the former Midland Railway station at Lansdown, now named Cheltenham Spa, continues in use for passengers; there are no longer any railway facilities for freight.

¹⁴⁰McDermot, *History of the GWR*, 226.

¹⁴¹*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 17 February 1906; 29 December 1906.

¹⁴²11&12 Geo. 5, cap. 55, 486.

¹⁴³*Gloucestershire Echo*, 17 June 1929.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.* 6 June 1932.

¹⁴⁵*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 23 July 1949.

¹⁴⁶<https://sites.google.com/site/gloucestershirerailwaymemories/home/a-new-way-and-works/new-bridge-at-hatherley>; accessed 18 December 2018.

¹⁴⁷ <https://sites.google.com/site/gloucestershirerailwaymemories/home/final-years-of-the-loco-sub-sheds-at->

[cheltenham-malvern-road-and-tewkesbury](#); accessed 18 December 2018.

On the nationalisation of the railway network in 1948 the former GWR lines into Cheltenham became part of the Western Region of British Railways and the former LMS lines became part of the Midland Region.¹⁴⁸ Ten years later the passenger service along the former MSWJR from Southampton and Andover was transferred from Lansdown station to St James station.¹⁴⁹ This made connections to and from the north much more difficult and made the service even less useful for passengers. Already it had been reduced to one through train per day (except Sunday)¹⁵⁰ and this came to an end on 9 September 1961, when the line was closed completely south of the junction at Andoversford.¹⁵¹

In an attempt to increase long-distance patronage on the former GWR mainline, on 17 June 1956 the Western Region introduced an express service of diesel multiple units making five return journeys each weekday and two on Sunday between the West Midlands and South Wales, stopping at Malvern Road station.¹⁵² In 10 September 1962 this service was transferred to Lansdown¹⁵³ station, leaving the holiday trains between the West Midlands and the South West running on summer Saturdays as the only long-distance passenger traffic. These continued until 1966.¹⁵⁴ The local stopping train service to Honeybourne was withdrawn from 7 March 1960.¹⁵⁵ From time to time trains were diverted from the former Midland mainline, but after 1966 the only regular passenger trains to use the line were the twice a day return service from Leamington Spa to Gloucester.¹⁵⁶ Special trains associated with the Cheltenham Gold Cup race meeting ran each March. These served the purpose-built Cheltenham race course station in Prestbury parish, which had been opened on 12

¹⁴⁸*Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 July 1948.

¹⁴⁹*Trains Illustrated*, Vol XII, No.124, January 1959, 3.

¹⁵⁰*British Railways Western Region Timetable 12 June to 10 September 1961*, Table 115.

¹⁵¹*Gloucestershire Echo*, 11 September 1961.

¹⁵²*ibid.* 19 June 1956.

¹⁵³*British Railways Western Region Timetable 10 September 1962 to 16 June 1963*, Table 32.

¹⁵⁴*British Rail Western Region Timetable 18 April 1966 to 5 March 1967*, Table 13; *ibid.* 6 March 1967 to 5 May 1968, Table 10.

¹⁵⁵*Gloucestershire Echo*, 7 March 1960.

¹⁵⁶See e.g. *British Rail Western Region Timetable 18 April 1966 to 5 March 1967*, Table 29.

March 1912.¹⁵⁷ Both these services came to an end in March 1968.¹⁵⁸ However, the race course station re-opened for the Gold Cup meeting in 1971 to alleviate the problems caused by the sixty coaches ferrying racegoers across the town from Lansdown station.¹⁵⁹ The proposal by Cheltenham Town Council to turn part of the route between Lansdown junction and the race course station into a relief road failed in 1973 when British Railways announced a change of mind regarding closure of the line.¹⁶⁰ Complete closure of the line came in August 1976 when a goods train derailed near Winchcombe causing damage to the track.¹⁶¹ Although there were several demands to convert it into a line for tourists,¹⁶² lifting of the rails began in July 1979.¹⁶³ In 2002 the race course station was re-opened as the southern terminus of the Great Western Steam Railway, based in Toddington.¹⁶⁴ The route through the town was completed as a cycle path in 2005 and a branch to the site of the former St James station in 2006.¹⁶⁵

The decline of the services on the line to Honeybourne impacted on the former GWR stations of St James and Malvern Road. Additionally, the local service to Kingham via Andoversford was withdrawn on 15 October 1962.¹⁶⁶ This meant fewer locomotives were required, which led to the closure of the engine shed at Malvern Road station on 2 March 1964.¹⁶⁷ From 24 May 1964 all Sunday trains were transferred to Lansdown station.¹⁶⁸ As a result of the Beeching Report of 1963,¹⁶⁹ from 2 November 1964 the four times daily (except Sundays) stopping train service from St James

¹⁵⁷*Cheltenham Looker On*, 9 March 1912.

¹⁵⁸*Gloucestershire Echo*, 25 March 1968.

¹⁵⁹*Ibid.* 26 February 1971.

¹⁶⁰*Ibid.* 30 June 1972, 4 October 1972, 10 April 1973.

¹⁶¹*Ibid.* 26 August 1976.

¹⁶²*Ibid.* 2 August 1968, 12 July 1979.

¹⁶³*Ibid.* 13 July 1979.

¹⁶⁴https://www.gwsr.com/enthusiasts/History/Railway_Timeline.html. Accessed 3 December 2018.

¹⁶⁵https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/33/parks_and_open_spaces/547/honeybourne_line. Accessed 3 December 2018.

¹⁶⁶*Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 October 1962.

¹⁶⁷ Tales of Two Sub-sheds - Tewkesbury and Cheltenham Malvern Road, <https://sites.google.com/site/gloucestershirerailwaymemories/home/final-years-of-the-loco-sub-sheds-at-cheltenham-malvern-road-and-tewkesbury>; accessed 1 November 2018.

¹⁶⁸*Gloucestershire Echo*, 22 May 1964.

¹⁶⁹British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways: Part 1 Report* (London, 1963) 108.

along the main line to South Wales was withdrawn.¹⁷⁰ By October 1965 the two main platforms at Lansdown station had been lengthened and the bay platforms removed¹⁷¹ so that the London trains could be diverted from St James station and this allowed its closure for passengers and goods, excluding coal, on 2 January 1966.¹⁷² The coal yard continued to operate until 31 October.¹⁷³ Malvern Road station also closed at the same time and the Leamington Spa to Gloucester train ceased to call. Since that date the site at St James has been developed as a car park and retail and commercial premises; the use of the Malvern Road site has largely been developed for residential use, although the station approach still survives.

All the above developments since 1945 have meant only the ex-Midland Railway main line has remained open. Here also there have been reductions in services in the two decades after 1945 as rail-borne traffic generally lessened. The Beeching Report recommended the withdrawal of the local trains serving the small stations on the main line between Gloucester and Worcester¹⁷⁴ and this took place from 4 January 1965 when Cheltenham lost another of its local services.¹⁷⁵ The four tracks southwards towards Gloucester were reduced to two in September 1966.¹⁷⁶ In 1967 a coal concentration depôt was opened in the High Street goods yard. It closed c.1985,¹⁷⁷ which meant that freight ceased to be carried by rail into and out of the town. The long siding north of the High Street which served the gasworks went out of use when conversion of the area to natural gas was completed in March 1971.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁰M. Oakley, *Gloucestershire Railway Stations* (Wimborne, 2003) 103; *British Rail Western Region Timetable New Issue 4 January 1965 to 13 June 1965*, Table 80.

¹⁷¹<https://sites.google.com/site/gloucestershirerailwaymemories/home/train-services/175-years-of-trains-at-cheltenham-lansdown-station--1840-to-2015>; accessed 1 November 2018.

¹⁷²*Gloucestershire Echo*, 3 January 1966.

¹⁷³Oakley, *Gloucestershire Railway Stations*, 44.

¹⁷⁴British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways: Part 1 Report* (London, 1963) 108.

¹⁷⁵*Gloucestershire Echo*, 4 January 1965.

¹⁷⁶<https://sites.google.com/site/gloucestershirerailwaymemories/home/a-new-way-and-works/new-bridge-at-hatherley>; accessed 1 November 2018.

¹⁷⁷<https://sites.google.com/site/gloucestershirerailwaymemories/home/train-services/31-october-1964>; <https://sites.google.com/site/gloucestershirerailwaymemories/home/gloucestershire-railway-memories/walter-dendy-s-gloucestershire-railway-memories>; both accessed 1 November 2018.

¹⁷⁸*Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 March 1971.

As a result of rail privatisation, in February 1996 Cheltenham station came under the management of Train Operating Company Great Western Trains.¹⁷⁹ In September 2015 the station came under the control of Train Operating Company Great Western Railway.¹⁸⁰ Apart from the demolition of the Doric portico in January 1961,¹⁸¹ the main structures of the station have changed little since its opening in 1840.

Road traffic

Stage Coaches

A carrier service that connected Cheltenham directly with London had been established by 1637.¹⁸² There remained one service weekly between Cheltenham and London in 1780, but passengers were required to make their way to The Frog Mill to pick up the Gloucester-London coach for the 3 day journey.¹⁸³ By 1825 there were daily services to London from the Plough, Royal and George hotels and Spencer's Coach Office and coaches were also available south to Plymouth and Southampton, east to Leicester and north to Holyhead, Manchester and Liverpool.¹⁸⁴

For a while it was thought stage coaches could convert to steam.¹⁸⁵ In January 1831 Sir Charles Dance purchased 3 steam carriages from Goldsworthy Gurney and the first regular steam-driven carriage service began on the Gloucester to Cheltenham tramroad on 21 February 1831. The cost of maintaining the engines and the imposition of a toll of £2 on steam carriages as opposed to 2s. for a four-horse stage coach meant that the service was not viable.¹⁸⁶

Following the opening of the railway the stage coach network shrank, with the list of daily services in 1847 serving destinations in the Forest of Dean, Ross, Hereford and Wales only.¹⁸⁷ The

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 8 February 1996.

¹⁸⁰ *Railway Herald*, Issue 472, 23 September 2015, 4.

¹⁸¹ See above p.???

¹⁸² J. Taylor, *The Carriers Cosmographie* (London, 1637); idem, *A Brief Director for Those That Would Send Their Letters to Any Parts of England, Scotland, or Ireland* (London, [1642]).

¹⁸³ Butler, *Cheltenham Guide*, pp. 96-7.

¹⁸⁴ Williams, *New Guide*, pp. 199-202.

¹⁸⁵ Louise Allen, *Stagecoach Travel* (2014).

¹⁸⁶ Francis Macerone, *A Few Facts concerning Elementary Locomotion* (2nd edn., 1834), p. 86.

¹⁸⁷ Hunt & Co., *City of Gloucester and Cheltenham Directory & Court Guide* (1847), p. 60.

coach between Cheltenham and Oxford was also still running in 1879.¹⁸⁸ In 1880 a service daily to Cirencester and weekly to Broadway was announced, but operated for only two months.¹⁸⁹

Trams and motor buses

An electric tramway was constructed between Cheltenham and Cleeve Hill in 1901.¹⁹⁰ During a test run at the end of July the current failed as a tramcar neared the summit of Cleeve Hill and the subsequent accident resulted in two fatalities.¹⁹¹ Despite this the tramway formally opened to the public the following month.¹⁹² In 1903 it was agreed to extend the service along the Bath Road to Leckhampton.¹⁹³ By 1914 the Cheltenham & District Light Railway Company ran trams to Southam and Cleeve Hill, Charlton Kings and Leckhampton with all cars passing the Midland and Great Western railway stations.¹⁹⁴ In the late 1920s the company proposed to modernize the service by introducing trolleybuses, but this aroused opposition to overhead wires from the borough council and local residents.¹⁹⁵ Instead in 1929 the company obtained a parliamentary bill authorising them to replace the existing services with motorbuses, thereby becoming the Cheltenham District Traction Company.¹⁹⁶ The first red and yellow liveried motorbuses arrived in the town in November 1929.¹⁹⁷ The process of removing the tram rails and making good the roadway proceeded over the following year.¹⁹⁸ In 1939 the company was acquired by Red & White, although the separate name survived.¹⁹⁹ On nationalisation in 1950 Bristol Tramways assumed control, again maintaining the separate name.²⁰⁰ In 1983 the National Bus Company subsidiary Bristol Omnibus was split into three separate companies, with the Cheltenham depot coming under the aegis of the Cheltenham & Gloucester

¹⁸⁸*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 20 Dec. 1879.

¹⁸⁹*Cheltenham Examiner*, 12 May, 2 June & 4 Aug. 1880.

¹⁹⁰CLSC 63G388CE; *Cheltenham Examiner*, 10 July 1901.

¹⁹¹*Western Morning News*, 30 July 1901.

¹⁹²*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 24 Aug. 1901.

¹⁹³*Gloucester Citizen*, 2 Sep. & 5 Oct. 1903.

¹⁹⁴*Kell's Directory of Gloucestershire 1914*, p. 78.

¹⁹⁵GA CBR/C/3/1/2.

¹⁹⁶*Hansard*, vol. 226, 25 Mar. 1929; Bristol Archives, 39735/Bri/Corp/Co/10.

¹⁹⁷*Gloucestershire Echo*, 29 Nov. 1929.

¹⁹⁸*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 1 Mar. 1930.

¹⁹⁹*Commercial Motor*, 13 January 1950.

²⁰⁰Bristol Archives, 39735/Che.

Omnibus Company.²⁰¹ In 1986 this became the fifth subsidiary of the National Bus Company to be sold to the private sector after a management buyout.²⁰² In 1993 the Cheltenham & Gloucester Omnibus Company was acquired by Stagecoach.²⁰³

Motor Coaches

In 1926 George Readings established regular motor coach services to London and offered excursions locally and to seaside resorts.²⁰⁴ Black and White Motorways Ltd. was established in 1928²⁰⁵ and bought up by a syndicate led by Birmingham and Midland in 1930.²⁰⁶ A new coach station was opened in 1931 in the grounds of St Margaret's Villa with access to St Margaret's Road and North Place and utilising the house as offices.²⁰⁷ In 1934 Associated Motorways was established as a co-operation between several separate coach companies with the hub at Cheltenham.²⁰⁸ Coach services continued during the war, until they were suspended by government order in October 1942.²⁰⁹ The coach station was improved and enlarged between 1953 and 1956, with a new office block built on the site of the former villa that had been destroyed by a wartime bomb.²¹⁰ With the development of the motorway network and the opening of the Severn Bridge Cheltenham lost its role as a geographically strategic hub. Its use as a National Express interchange ended in 1984.²¹¹

Traffic Management post-1945

The level of road traffic passing through Cheltenham on the main London-South Wales trunk road was a concern by 1928, when the borough council in conjunction with the AA signposted an alternative route avoiding the town centre along Hales Road, Sandford Mill Road, Sandford Road and

²⁰¹*Commercial Motor*, 23 July 1983.

²⁰²*Financial Times*, 4 Nov. 1986.

²⁰³*Newcastle Journal*, 27 Nov. 1993.

²⁰⁴John Chandler, 'Black & White in Cheltenham', *CLHS Journal* 24 (2018), pp. 32-8.

²⁰⁵GA D58522/5/4

²⁰⁶Chandlet, 'Black & White', p. 34.

²⁰⁷*Gloucester Citizen*, 26 June 1931.

²⁰⁸*Gloucester Citizen*, 11 May 1934.

²⁰⁹*Gloucestershire Echo*, 5 Oct. 1942.

²¹⁰GA D14120.

²¹¹Keith A. Jenkinson, *National Express Coaches* (Stroud, 2017).

Montpellier Terrace.²¹² In 1930 the borough council made representations to the county council for a bypass,²¹³ but plans were overtaken by the outbreak of war.²¹⁴ In 1945-6 there were 314 road traffic accidents in Cheltenham, resulting in 19 deaths and more than 300 injuries.²¹⁵

A new arterial road linking the A40 and A4019 was initially developed as part of the post-war Hester's Way development and named Princess Elizabeth Way.²¹⁶ The reluctance of the county council to contribute to the funding²¹⁷ delayed the completion of the northern section, which included a short stretch outside the borough limits, until 1957.²¹⁸ In 1954 a census of traffic on the A40 west of the town showed that traffic on the road had increased by 66% from 1938 and tonnage by 246%, while there were 184 accidents on the road between October 1957 and January 1959, resulting in 3 deaths and 28 serious injuries.²¹⁹ The Golden Valley bypass eventually opened ten years later.²²⁰ In 1996 it was proposed to detrunk the A40 through Cheltenham and to make the A436 from Shipton Sollers to the Air Balloon a trunk road.²²¹ The alternative route was improved and signposted for through traffic, although the Highways Agency strategic route for traffic from London is via the M4 and A417/A419.²²²

In the post-war period congestion in the town centre was caused by local traffic and on-street parking rather than through traffic.²²³ In 1948 and 1949 the council attempted to relieve traffic congestion in the town centre by the introduction of one-way schemes.²²⁴ In the early 1950s Pittville

²¹²*Gloucester Citizen*, 1 Sep. 1928.

²¹³*Western Daily Press*, 21 Nov. 1929; *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 4 Jan. & 1 Feb. 1930.

²¹⁴*Gloucestershire Echo*, 4 Jan. 1944.

²¹⁵GA, GCC/COU/1/1/24, 17 Jul. 1946.

²¹⁶Hodsdon, *Cheltenham Gazetteer*, p. 140.

²¹⁷GA, GCC/COU/1/1/26, 30 Oct. 1953.

²¹⁸GA, GCC/COU/1/1/27, 16 Jan. 1957.

²¹⁹GA, GCC/COU/1/1/29, 22 Apr. 1959.

²²⁰Hodsdon, *Cheltenham Gazetteer*, p. 69.

²²¹GCC Environment Committee, 25 Sept. 1996.

²²²Highways Agency, *South Midlands Route Strategy Evidence Report* (April 2014), Appendix A.

²²³GA K1360/15; GA PF4.65GS.

²²⁴*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 9 & 16 Oct. 1948; *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 Sep. 1949.

Street was widened to relieve congestion on the route north.²²⁵ This was followed by the widening of Winchcombe Street a decade later.²²⁶ Tewkesbury Road was widened in 1974²²⁷ and the pedestrianisation of the High Street and Promenade area was introduced gradually from 1973.²²⁸ This was followed by the development of the northern relief road, which rerouted the A4019 from the Tewkesbury Road north onto the Swindon Road at the Lower High Street. The new stretches of road were completed in stages, with the Warwick Place Link Road being constructed in 1984²²⁹, the Phoenix Passage Link in 1985²³⁰ and the Fairview Road, Albion Street and Berkeley Street section in 1990.²³¹

Airport

In 1936 an airport, owned jointly by Cheltenham and Gloucester corporations was opened in Churchdown. Known as Staverton airport, it was initially managed by a Gloucester company that had run an airfield in the vicinity since 1932.²³² From 1957 it was run by the Gloucester and Cheltenham Joint Airport Committee.²³³ In 1992 the name was changed to Gloucestershire Airport and the two local authorities formed Gloucestershire Airport Ltd. to manage the airport and associated business park. In 2016 it handled 83,000 flights, making it the UK's busiest general aviation airport.²³⁴

²²⁵*Birmingham Post*, 11 Sep. 1954.

²²⁶*Birmingham Post*, 16 Jan. 1963.

²²⁷GA, CC/4/802.

²²⁸GA K1360/9; *The London Gazette*, 28 Oct. 1976.

²²⁹GA, K1827/3/29.

²³⁰GA CC/4/1658.

²³¹GA K1827/1/57 & K1827/2/9.

²³²GA, RR77.2GS; VCH Glos. IV, p. 202.

²³³VCH Glos. IV, p. 205.

²³⁴*Gloucestershire Echo*, 5 May 2017.