

Social History

Jan Broadway

Social Structure

In the decades immediately following the Second World War the age profile of the population remained comparatively stable. Around a fifth of the population were aged under 15 and around 9% were over 65. By 1981 the proportion of the population that was over 65 had doubled and has since remained at the same proportion. The proportion of managers and professionals within the working population was comparatively stable at around 22% from the 1940s to the 1970s, increasing to 28% by 1981, but returning to the earlier proportion in 1991. By 2001 the proportion in managerial and professional occupations had increased to 31% and had reached 37% in 2011.¹ In 1962 it was estimated that there were around 9,200 industrial workers in Cheltenham, of whom c. 45% were employed by companies outside the borough.² Conversely, only 2,000 GCHQ employees settled in the town itself, rather than the 3,400 originally expected.³

While nationally the country saw an increase in unemployment following the end of hostilities, Cheltenham was largely unaffected.⁴ During the first two post-war decades the unemployment rate in Cheltenham was below the national average, but a decline in the aircraft industry and restrictions on the introduction of new industry into the town meant that by 1967 unemployment had reached the national average of 2.4%.⁵ The introduction of new commercial and government employers into the town in the 1970s meant that unemployment returned to below the national average.⁶ The town continued to enjoy comparatively low unemployment into the 21st century, having a rate of 3.8% in 2001.⁷ The effect of the 2008 banking crisis on the town's economy led to an increase in local unemployment, which stood at 4.6% in 2011.⁸

Health and Welfare Provision

On 5 July 1948 all the Cheltenham hospitals joined the National Health Service under the administration of the South West Regional Board.⁹ The county infirmary in Swindon Road, formerly the public assistance institution, became St Paul's hospital and was designated a mental hospital.¹⁰ Part of the former infirmary was used to house unmarried mothers and

¹ *Census*, 1951 – 2011.

² GA, K149/41.

³ GA, PR4.82, 4.

⁴ *Glos. Echo*, 16 Nov. 1945 & 22 Mar. 1946.

⁵ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 1 Sep. 1967.

⁶ *The Times*, 5 May 1989.

⁷ *Census*, 2001.

⁸ *Glouc. Citizen*, 17 Dec. 2009; *Census*, 2011.

⁹ *Glos. Echo*, 5 July 1948.

¹⁰ GA, GCC/COU/1/1/24, 4 Nov. 1948.

their children.¹¹ By 1953 the premises were being used to accommodate homeless families and was separated from the hospital as the Swindon Road Hostel.¹² In 1953 the General & Eye Hospital had 224 beds.¹³

During the war the county council had agreed to the conversion of a property it had acquired in Pittville into the Sunnyside maternity home under the Emergency Hospital Scheme.¹⁴ In 1946 the county council required the return of Sunnyside, so that it could be converted to its originally intended use as an old people's home. The Ministry of Health proposed the erection of six temporary huts in the grounds of the General Hospital, until a more permanent building could be provided.¹⁵ In 1948 the South West Regional Board acquired Sunnyside as a maternity home on a five year lease.¹⁶ Sunnyside was officially opened as an old people's home in June 1954.¹⁷ Thereafter a maternity hospital was provided on the Swindon Road site and administered with St Paul's hospital.¹⁸

The Colbalt Appeal Fund was founded in 1964 by Dr Fred Hanna, a consultant radiotherapist, to raise funds to buy a Cobalt Radiotherapy Unit.¹⁹ A 20 bed Colbalt Unit for the treatment of cancer at the General Hospital opened in 1966.²⁰ The 3D body scanner acquired in 1979 was the first in clinical use in the world.²¹ The Colbalt Unit moved to Linton House, Thirlestaine Road in 1996,²² opening an MRI imaging centre in 2005.²³ A new breast clinic, built in the grounds of Linton House, opened in 2010.²⁴

The 20-bed Nuffield Cotswold Nursing Home in Talbot Road opened in 1973, following concern about an acute shortage of private beds in the area.²⁵ In 2000 it moved to a converted former Dowty building in Hatherley Lane as the 38-bed Cheltenham and Gloucester Nuffield Hospital.²⁶ In 2015 it launched a specialist sports injuries clinic.²⁷

¹¹ GA, GCC/COU/1/1/25, 12 Jul. 1950.

¹² GA, GCC/COU/1/1/26, 28 Apr. 1954.

¹³ GA, GCC/COU/1/1/26, 22 Apr. 1953.

¹⁴ GA, GCC/COU/1/1/23, 17 Jan. & 18 Apr. 1945.

¹⁵ GA, GCC/COU/1/1/24, 17 Jul. 1946.

¹⁶ *Glouc. Citizen*, 7 Apr. 1948; GCC/COU/1/1/25, 1 Nov. 1950.

¹⁷ GA, GCC/COU/1/1/26, 19 Jan. 1955.

¹⁸ GA, HO9; *Geographia Cheltenham Street Plan* (c1960).

¹⁹ *Western Daily Press*, 12 May 2010.

²⁰ *Tewkesbury Register*, 19 Nov. 1965; *Birmingham Post*, 17 Sep. 1966.

²¹ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 19 Sep. 1979.

²² *Glos. Echo*, 30 Mar. 2013.

²³ *Western Daily Press*, 8 May 2010.

²⁴ *Glos. Echo*, 30 Aug. 2008 & 21 Dec. 2010;.

²⁵ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 24 Jan. 1973.

²⁶ Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 292; *Sunday Times*, 6 Apr. 2003.

²⁷ *Glos. Echo*, 28 Jan. 2015.

After children's services were moved into the General Hospital, the former children's hospital became the Battledown Centre for disabled children.²⁸ In 2006 the Battledown children's ward was controversially closed to in-patients.²⁹ In 1996 the St Paul's maternity hospital was closed and replaced by a new maternity unit at the General Hospital.³⁰ A new medical centre was built in the St Paul's grounds.³¹ The St Luke's wing of the general hospital opened in 2009, housing intensive care and high dependency units to replace the Delancey hospital.³²

In 1946 the Cheltenham Old People's Housing Society was established on the initiative of Lilian Faithfull J.P., former principal of the Ladies' College. A house in Pittville was acquired to provide accommodation for 20 aged residents.³³ In 1948 the county council concluded an agreement with the charity to provide two homes in Cheltenham.³⁴ A third home, Faithfull House, was registered as an old people's home by January 1952.³⁵ The charity also ran a home at The Knole, St Mark's.³⁶ In 2007 the charity changed its name to Lillian Faithfull Homes (subsequently Lillian Faithfull Care)³⁷, which in 2020 ran four care homes in Cheltenham.³⁸ The boy's orphanage in St Margaret's Road closed in 1956;³⁹ the building was converted to an old people's home with the support of Sir George Dowty. It closed in 2018.⁴⁰ In the 1950s bungalows were built in Pope's Close, within the grounds of The Elms, and one-bedroom flats at Alstone Court, Alstone Lane to provide sheltered housing for the elderly.⁴¹ In the 1960s the site of Arle House was used to provide accommodation for the elderly.⁴² In 1978 the council earmarked a vacant site in Winchcombe Street, then used for car parking, to provide flats for elderly sheltered accommodation. Robert Harvey House, built a decade later, provided 80 beds in 2005.⁴³ In 2012 a new care home opened on the site of the former Monkscroft primary school. Run by The Orders of St John Care Trust, it took residents from Arle House and Ellerslie, Pittville.⁴⁴ In 2013 the trust opened a further 81-bed care home,

²⁸ *Glos. Echo*, 26 Mar. 2010.

²⁹ *Glos. Echo*, 23 Dec. 2008.

³⁰ *The Independent*, 11 July 1997; Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 244.

³¹ *Western Daily Press*, 23 Dec. 1999.

³² *Glos. Hospitals NHS Trust, Acute Angle* (June 2008), 25; *Glos. Echo*, 11 Apr. & 24 June 2009.

³³ *Glos. Echo*, 21 Mar. 1947.

³⁴ GA, GCC/COU/1/1/25, 31 Oct. 1951.

³⁵ GA, GCC/COU/1/1/25, 16 Jan. 1952.

³⁶ GA, GCC/COU/1/1/26, 15 Jul. 1953.

³⁷ FCA, Mutuals Public Register, 12952R; Charity No. 1122183; Company No. 6461263.

³⁸ <https://www.lilianfaithfull.co.uk/>

³⁹ GA, GCC/COU/1/1/27, 11 Jul. 1956.

⁴⁰ GA, GCC/COU/1/1/28, 21 Jan. 1959; *Glos. Echo*, 15 Nov. 2008 & 22 Feb. 2018.

⁴¹ GA, GCC/COU/1/1/28, 17 Jul. 1957; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 5, 137.

⁴² GA, K577/2/14; DC137/4/18.

⁴³ GA, PF4.79, 16, 20-1; CBC Online, *A Housing Strategy For Older People in Cheltenham 2005-08* (Draft, 2005),

⁴⁴ *Glos. Echo*, 21 Sep. 2012.

built on a former factory site in Windsor Street.⁴⁵ The Wentworth Court, a 62-bed specialist dementia home opened in 2015, on the site of the former Arle House nursing home.⁴⁶

The Cheltenham Old People's Welfare Association was formed in 1948, when it had 80 members and met weekly in the Y.M.C.A. hut in Royal Well.⁴⁷ The association provided a Meals on Wheels and a visiting service.⁴⁸ As the Cheltenham Senior Citizens' Welfare Committee the charity continues in existence in 2020.⁴⁹

In 1959 L.G. Northcroft of Spirax-Sarco purchased a house in Overton Road and the Rotary Club began raising £10,000 for its conversion into a Cheshire Home.⁵⁰ In 1962 there were 23 patients.⁵¹ The home was extended and extensively renovated in 1977⁵² and moved to Leckhampton in 1990.⁵³

As well as care homes, from the 1970s onwards there were many private developments, both new-build and conversions, aimed specifically at those of retirement age.⁵⁴ By 2015 there was some concern that the market had become saturated, and that office space in the town centre was being lost.⁵⁵

Leisure and Culture

The Cheltenham Cultural Council was formed in 1944 at a meeting organised by the Rotary Club to address the 'right use' of leisure after the war.⁵⁶ The Cheltenham Esperanto Society affiliated a few months later.⁵⁷ By the autumn of 1946 nearly 50 societies were associated with the council,⁵⁸ which was based at the School of Art in St Margaret's Road and also had individual members.⁵⁹ Following a meeting arranged by the council at the Rotunda, the Cheltenham and District Naturalists' Society was formed in 1948.⁶⁰ The council published a magazine⁶¹ and arranged a winter programme of talks in addition to supporting other

⁴⁵ *Western Daily Press*, 10 Nov. 2011; *Glos. Echo*, 6 Mar. 2013.

⁴⁶ *Glos. Echo*, 1 May 2015.

⁴⁷ *Glos. Echo*, 11 Sep. 1948.

⁴⁸ Cheltenham Senior Citizens' Welfare Committee, *Our Story* (1995)

⁴⁹ Charity Commission, No. 212051.

⁵⁰ *Gloucestershire Countryside* (Dec. 1959), 320.

⁵¹ *Tewkesbury Register*, 9 Nov. 1962.

⁵² *Cheshire Smile* (Summer 1978), 11.

⁵³ Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 293.

⁵⁴ *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 134.

⁵⁵ *Glos. Echo*, 25 Aug. 2015.

⁵⁶ *Glos. Echo*, 29 Mar. 1944.

⁵⁷ *Glos. Echo*, 11 Sep. 1944.

⁵⁸ *Glos. Echo*, 8 Nov. 1946.

⁵⁹ *Glos. Echo*, 4 Apr. 1946.

⁶⁰ *Glos. Echo*, 22 Jan. 1948.

⁶¹ GA, PQ6.9GS

cultural events, but by 1950 was in financial trouble.⁶² It was disbanded in 1953.⁶³ In 1966 the Cheltenham Arts Council was established as a charity to foster and promote the arts in Cheltenham and the surrounding area.⁶⁴ In 2020 the Cheltenham Arts Council had 56 member societies, encompassing the visual arts, music, drama, literature and history.⁶⁵

In 1947 the Victory Fund committee purchased Nelson House, Trafalgar Street as premises for a club for ex-services personnel.⁶⁶ The club moved to Burlington House, Lypiatt Road in 2002.⁶⁷ The New Club, which had seen declining numbers in the decades before the war, began to admit lady members in 1950.⁶⁸ By 1962 it had 560 members, of which two thirds lived within six miles.⁶⁹ In 1970 the New Club sold the freehold of the Imperial Square premises and moved to Montpellier Parade as tenants of Eagle Star.⁷⁰

The civic playhouse opened in 1945, hosting 30 productions and two drama festivals in its first year.⁷¹ The civic players were formed to relieve the burden on the individual local amateur dramatic societies of producing sufficient plays to fill the programme, which featured over 80 plays in the next four years.⁷² In 1957 the council leased the building to the Cheltenham Theatre and Arts Club, who obtained guarantees from the five amateur companies that regularly produced shows.⁷³ Since that time the theatre has been run by volunteers, becoming a registered charity in 2001.⁷⁴

A community art gallery moved into the Proscenium building in Montpellier Gardens in 2007, securing a 25 year lease from the borough council in 2013.⁷⁵ Chapel Arts, a commercial multi-purpose gallery and arts space, opened in the former Baptist chapel in Knapp Road in 2017.⁷⁶

The Town Hall, designed as municipally-run concert and entertainment venue, continued to offer a varied programme throughout the year, and was regularly used for festival events.⁷⁷

⁶² *Glos. Echo*, 17 May 1950.

⁶³ GA, D5130/3.

⁶⁴ Charity Commission, No. 273501.

⁶⁵ <http://www.cheltenhamartscouncil.co.uk/>.

⁶⁶ *Glos. Echo*, 18 Mar. 1947.

⁶⁷ <https://thevictoryclub.org/>.

⁶⁸ Neil Parrack, *The New Club at Imperial Square* (Cheltenham, 2012), 110.

⁶⁹ Parrack, *The New Club*, 122.

⁷⁰ Parrack, *The New Club*, 128.

⁷¹ *Glos. Echo*, 13 April 1946.

⁷² *Glos. Echo*, 10 Apr. 1950; CW/63G792PLA.

⁷³ *Tewkesbury Register*, 4 Oct. 1957.

⁷⁴ Charity Commission 1088889; *Western Daily Press*, 7 Apr. 2015.

⁷⁵ *Glos. Echo*, 17 Oct. 2013.

⁷⁶ *Glos. Echo*, 18 Feb. 2017.

⁷⁷ <https://www.cheltenhamtownhall.org.uk/>.

The Opera House continued as a professional repertory theatre under the management of Wilfred Simpson, who produced his sixteenth pantomime in 1954/5.⁷⁸ When he was forced to retire due to ill health, the theatre was bought by the council in October 1955 with the support of the Arts Council.⁷⁹ Eighteen months later the council leased the loss-making theatre to a company led by Frank Maddox of the Theatre Royal, Bath.⁸⁰ Continuing losses resulted in the company closing the theatre in June 1959. Led by Margaret Davies of the Ellenborough Hotel and assisted by Cyril Wood, director of the South Western Arts Association, the Cheltenham Theatre Association was formed and raised £4,000. In October 1959 the association was granted a three year lease by the council.⁸¹ The theatre re-opened as the Everyman repertory theatre in May 1960.⁸² In June 1961 the theatre closed once more, but the agreement of its creditors to a moratorium allowed it to survive.⁸³ In 1983 the theatre closed for three years during a major refurbishment, as part of the Regent Arcade development.⁸⁴ In 1995 financial pressures led the Everyman to abandon repertory and become a receiving theatre.⁸⁵ In 2011 the Everyman underwent further refurbishment.⁸⁶

In 1945 there were six cinemas in Cheltenham: the Ritz (Lower High Street), Palace (High Street), Regal (Promenade), Coliseum (Albion Street), Gaumont (Winchcombe Street) and Daffodil (Suffolk Parade).⁸⁷ The Palace closed in 1954, as the building was too narrow to be converted to show widescreen or 3D films and became retail premises.⁸⁸ In 1955 the Gaumont (later the Odeon) began presenting live shows, hosting the Beatles and Rolling Stones in the 1960s.⁸⁹ The Daffodil became a bingo hall in 1963⁹⁰, followed by the Ritz in 1964⁹¹ and the Coliseum in 1974.⁹² The Regal was renamed the ABC in 1962 and closed in 1981, after which the building was demolished and replaced by an office block.⁹³ The Odeon survived as a cinema until 2006, when a new multiplex opened in the Brewery Centre.⁹⁴ A

⁷⁸ *The Stage*, 6 Jan. 1955.

⁷⁹ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 27 July & 1 Nov. 1955, 13 June 1956.

⁸⁰ *The Stage*, 14 Feb. 1957.

⁸¹ *Glos. Countryside* (Dec. 1959), 326.

⁸² *Birmingham Daily Post*, 4 May 1960.

⁸³ *The Stage*, 21 Sept. 1967.

⁸⁴ *The Stage*, 20 Mar. 1986; See Topography and Settlement, Urban Redevelopment, From 1973.

⁸⁵ *The Stage*, 23 Mar. 1995.

⁸⁶ *Glouc.. Citizen*, 3 Oct. 2011.

⁸⁷ *Glos. Echo*, 13 Nov. 1945.

⁸⁸ *Glos. Echo*, 26 Apr. 2018.

⁸⁹ *Glos. Echo*, 13 Sept. 2018 & 3 Jan. 2019.

⁹⁰ *Glos. Echo*, 5 Dec. 2016.

⁹¹ *Glos. Echo*, 16 Aug. 2014.

⁹² *Glos. Echo*, 6 Dec. 2016.

⁹³ *Glos. Echo*, 30 Aug. 2018; *Cotswold Life* (Nov. 1982), 42.

⁹⁴ *Western Daily Press*, 7 Nov. 2006.

branch of Gala Bingo opened in the Brewery in 2007, but closed in 2008. Ace Bingo in the former Ritz cinema building, the last surviving bingo hall in the town, closed in 2015.⁹⁵

In 1946 four public houses were closed by magistrates, including the bomb damaged Apple Tree, Russell Place. The Swindon Arms, Swindon Street, having 9 other licensed houses within 440 yds, was allowed a licence with the provision that it must be renovated. The Noah's Ark, St George's Street, having 38 licensed houses with 440 yds, was refused. Also refused was the Central Inn, Bennington Street and Brunswick Arms, Brunswick Street.⁹⁶ In 1960 the Benhall Residents Association opposed the building of a pub on the estate. When a referendum was held, 567 local residents voted against and 251 in favour. As more than 200 people were in favour, the magistrates granted the licence.⁹⁷ In 1968 there were 11 public houses owned by five breweries in the immediate vicinity of the High Street, in addition to the Plough Hotel and a Berni Inn.⁹⁸ Despite concerns being raised over the closure of pubs,⁹⁹ prior to Covid-19 Cheltenham's pub culture remained robust. In 2016 the Sandford Park Alehouse won CAMRA's national pub of the year award and the Cheltenham and Gloucester Beer Week took place in September.¹⁰⁰

The Sandford Park open-air pool remained popular¹⁰¹, and with a record attendance in 1955 made a profit for the first time since it opened.¹⁰² In the 1960s an application to erect a covered pool on the site was rejected.¹⁰³ Folly (Tommy Taylors) Lane was preferred for the site of the new municipal baths,¹⁰⁴ which opened in 1971.¹⁰⁵ These replaced the Alstone Baths, which closed a few years later and were demolished in the 1980s.¹⁰⁶ As Pittville became the focus for the development of the town's leisure facilities,¹⁰⁷ the lido declined and the site was considered for redevelopment. In 1996 it was taken over by a charitable trust on a 25-year lease (renewed for 35 years in 2019).¹⁰⁸ Following a £700,000 refurbishment in 2006, it officially reopened in May 2008¹⁰⁹ and around 600 season passes were sold that year.¹¹⁰ In 2004 the large number of groups and clubs running sessions at the

⁹⁵ *Glos. Echo*, 16 Aug. 2014 & 21 Mar. 2015.

⁹⁶ *Glos. Echo*, 8 Mar. 1946.

⁹⁷ GA, D11753/1.

⁹⁸ GA, D4322/1.

⁹⁹ *Glos. Echo*, 5 Apr. 2012, 14 Aug. 2014.

¹⁰⁰ *Glos. Echo*, 10 Mar. & 15 Sep. 2016.

¹⁰¹ *Glos. Echo*, 12 May 1950.

¹⁰² *Birmingham Daily Post*, 21 Sep. 1955.

¹⁰³ GA, K577/2/40.

¹⁰⁴ GA, K577/2/53.

¹⁰⁵ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 5 May 1971.

¹⁰⁶ GA, K767/1/1.

¹⁰⁷ GA, PF4.79, 8.

¹⁰⁸ CBC Online, Cabinet, Lease of Sandford Park Lido (5 Nov. 2019).

¹⁰⁹ *Glos. Echo*, 5 May 2008.

¹¹⁰ *Glos. Echo*, 23 Apr. 2009.

Pittville pool led to complaints, that there were insufficient opportunities for individual swimmers to use the facilities.¹¹¹ Following its refurbishment after the 2007 floods, the Pittville leisure centre attracted 900 members, with the pool being particularly popular.¹¹²

Festivals

The first Cheltenham music festival was planned during the war and took place over four days in June 1945 at the Town Hall, featuring a programme of talks and three evening concerts by the London Philharmonic Orchestra. It featured works by William Walton, Benjamin Britten and Arthur Bliss, conducted by the composers.¹¹³ From the outset the festival programme emphasised works by contemporary British composers.¹¹⁴ The competitive music festival, which had begun in 1926 but been suspended during the war, resumed in May 1946.¹¹⁵ In 1947 the Hallé Orchestra led by John Barbirolli began a 15 year association with the contemporary music festival.¹¹⁶ Although the festival made a loss, councillors felt it compensated for this by generating publicity for the town and increasing the number of visitors.¹¹⁷ In 1948 the festival was extended to two weeks. In order to secure Arts Council funding, which was not available to local authorities, Cheltenham Arts Festivals Ltd. was established as a non-profit making company, with the council having a majority on the board.¹¹⁸

The first Cheltenham Festival of Contemporary Literature, organised by Cheltenham Arts Festivals Ltd. took place in October 1949.¹¹⁹ Exhibitions were run in conjunction with both festivals.¹²⁰ In 1951 Cheltenham was one of the primary centres for the Festival of Britain with exhibitions of Architecture, Contemporary Art and Cotswold Crafts and open-air performances of *As You Like It* in Pittville Park running alongside the music festival in June.¹²¹ The lecture programme for the first Contemporary Arts Festival in May 1955 was shortened due to the General Election, but the exhibitions and film programme continued as planned.¹²² In 1957 the Art and Literature festivals were amalgamated, running for a fortnight from 21 September.¹²³ There was no literature festival in 1961 or 1964,¹²⁴ while the

¹¹¹ *Western Daily Press*, 11 Feb. 2004.

¹¹² *Glos. Echo*, 3 Dec. 2008.

¹¹³ *Glos. Echo*, 7 June 1945.

¹¹⁴ *Glos. Echo*, 30 July & 25 Nov. 1946; Frank Howes, *The Cheltenham Festival* (1965), 1.

¹¹⁵ *Chelt. Chronicle*, 27 Jan. 1940; *Glos. Echo*, 20 May 1946.

¹¹⁶ *Western Daily Press*, 3 Apr. 1947; Howes, *Cheltenham Festival*, 10.

¹¹⁷ *Glos. Echo*, 27 July 1946; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 12 July 1947.

¹¹⁸ Howes, *Cheltenham Festival*, 10-11; *Glos. Echo*, 8 July & 18 Sep. 1948.

¹¹⁹ GA, PQ7.8 (1-3) GS; *Western Daily Press*, 8 Oct. 1949.

¹²⁰ *Glos. Echo*, 30 June 1948, 30 Sept. 1949 & 3 Oct. 1950.

¹²¹ *Glos. Countryside* (Apr.-June 1951), 387, 397; *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 29 June 1951.

¹²² *Birmingham Daily Post*, 25 Apr. 1955.

¹²³ *The Stage*, 1 Aug. 1957.

¹²⁴ Nicola Bennett, *Speaking Volumes* (Stroud, 1999), 41, 47.

music festival received poor reviews in 1961 and made a substantial loss in 1963.¹²⁵ In response events were increasingly built around the core festivals to increase their attraction.¹²⁶

Under the artistic direction of the poet P.J. Kavanagh in the 1970s the literature festival established a strong reputation for poetry and for popularising the Cotswold school of poets.¹²⁷ In 1980 the festival included 15 events over 4 days and sold 2, 046 tickets.¹²⁸ In 1982 it was described as having been transformed 'from a kind of cathedral of the arts for a local elite to an untidy, sprawling, magnificent world of books and ideas'.¹²⁹ In 1990 there were 65 events over 8 days and 13,621 tickets were sold.¹³⁰

In 1980 the music festival was extended to 15 days and in addition to the Town Hall and Pump Room included performances at Berkeley and Sudeley castles.¹³¹ The 1988 programme covered 200 years of music in celebration of the town's commemoration of the visit of George III and included an organ recital at Gloucester cathedral.¹³² In its 75th anniversary year the festival continued to champion contemporary British composers, featuring three premieres on its opening weekend.¹³³

A separate Jazz Festival has been held since April 1996,¹³⁴ while the Cheltenham Science Festival began in May 2002.¹³⁵ In 2005 and 2006 the Great British Cheese Festival was held in Montpellier Gardens. In the second year the festival was adversely affected by wet weather.¹³⁶ With the cheese festival having moved elsewhere, the Cheltenham Food and Drink Festival was initiated in 2008.¹³⁷ There was an annual film festival between 2010 and 2012,¹³⁸ and a revival in 2019.¹³⁹ The inaugural poetry festival was held in 2011 under the direction of an MA student at the University of Gloucestershire, and by 2019 had expanded to a ten day event.¹⁴⁰

¹²⁵ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 17 & 24 July 1961; Howes, *Cheltenham Festival*, 41.

¹²⁶ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 7 July 1964.

¹²⁷ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 21 Aug. 1975 & 9 Apr. 1976; *The Stage*, 22 Sep. 1977.

¹²⁸ Bennett, *Speaking Volumes*, 70.

¹²⁹ *Financial Times*, 25 Oct. 1982.

¹³⁰ Bennett, *Speaking Volumes*, 70.

¹³¹ *The Stage*, 27 Mar. 1980.

¹³² *Cheltenham Bicentenary Commemorative Programme* (1988), 52-3, 55.

¹³³ *The Guardian*, 8 July 2019.

¹³⁴ *The Times*, 16 Apr. 1996.

¹³⁵ *Daily Telegraph*, 18 June 2001 & 22 May 2002.

¹³⁶ *Western Daily Press*, 1 & 24 Oct. 2005; *Evening Standard*, 4 Oct. 2006.

¹³⁷ *Glos. Echo*, 23 June 2008.

¹³⁸ *Glos. Echo*, 27 Mar. 2010; *Bristol Post*, 12 Oct. 2012.

¹³⁹ *Glos. Echo*, 26 July 2018; <https://cheltfilm.com/>.

¹⁴⁰ *Glos. Echo*, 26 Nov. 2010; <https://cheltenhampoetryfestival.com/>.