

I thank John Chandler again for the excellent production and also all the contributors, without whom the newsletter would not exist. We hope you find our eleventh newsletter interesting and informative. If you have any comments or further ideas, please let me know: dhaldred@btinternet.com.

David Aldred
Editor

Welcome from the Editor

Welcome to our eleventh newsletter, keeping you in touch with the work of the County History Trust. You can read of the latest developments below, but the most significant development since our last newsletter is that the drafts for Cheltenham 1738-1852 are now publicly available on the academy website (<http://www.vchglosacademy.org/Cheltenham1738.html>). There you can read about the building of the town's iconic Pittville pump room.

My thanks go to Jan Broadway for contacting contributors and who, with Jonathan Comber, has distributed the digital version of the newsletter.

Report from the Trust

In common with many other charities, the Trust has decided to update its governance structure in the light of changes in charity legislation since 2013. We wanted to secure the benefits of being what is termed a 'Charitable Incorporated Organisation', rather than an old-style 'Unincorporated Association'. Those who have been down this road with other groups



Pittville pump room (David Aldred)

VCH Gloucestershire

Newsletter 11 July 2019

will know that it's not possible to simply upgrade an existing charity. Instead, a new one has to be set up, and in January, the Charity Commission approved our application to do just this. We have the same name (with a CIO on the end when we need to be formal), but a different charity number, 1181794.

Banking details are unchanged, but there is one piece of admin to do with Gift Aid. The next Gift Aid claim we make will be in the name of the new charity, covering eligible donations from 29 Jan 2019 onwards. Before too long, we will be contacting supporters who have current Gift Aid declarations, asking them to complete a fresh form with the new registration number. The old charity won't be formally wound up until all this has happened. If you receive the newsletter electronically, a declaration is attached which we should be grateful if those of you who have previously made Gift Aid declarations could complete and send to the Trust Treasurer (Jonathan Comber).

While on money matters, you may have seen elsewhere that BT has decided at relatively short notice to stop offering its online charitable giving scheme, MyDonate. Several of you have used this in the past (thank you), and we shall be investigating possible alternatives.

Upon the creation of the new charity, we were able to welcome a new trustee, Jane Marley, who while joining us in a personal capacity, in her day job is the Museums and Heritage officer for South Glos Council. With Jane's knowledge of the local scene in South Gloucestershire, we should now be able to forge stronger VCH links in the area, and keep up progress on Volume 14 – the Red Book which will cover Yate, the Sodburys, and neighbouring parishes. In February we regretfully said goodbye to Katy Layton-Jones, who moved on to a permanent post with the Open University. As a consequence of her departure, we have asked Alex Craven to start working on the remaining Churn Valley parishes which will complete Volume 16's intended coverage of the Cirencester district. Katy's final appearance was at our fund-raising event at Cheltenham Town Hall – very kindly co-hosted by the Honourable Company of Gloucestershire - where she gave a lively talk on her researches up to that point on Daglingworth. At the meeting, we were able to announce two recent grants, each of £1,000, one from the Honourable Company itself, and one from the Charles Irving Charitable Trust (appropriately, the room we were in was only yards

from a bronze bust of Sir Charles, a long-serving Cheltenham MP). These grants, and the new regular supporters who signed up after the same meeting, are of course very welcome, but we have a continuing challenge to raise the sums needed to keep the research going. If everyone who has done a Standing Order for the VCH could persuade one or two friends, relations or acquaintances to do the same, it would be a huge help, as these regular contributions (Gift Aided when appropriate) are our most reliable form of monthly income. We will of course also continue to approach grant-making trusts and foundations wherever we can see a match between their charitable aims and our own requirements. If you know of a potentially well-disposed trust that we might not previously have heard about, do please let us know.

Amazingly, next April GCHT chalks up a whole decade since it was set up in 2010. Some trustees have been on board since Day 1, and while continuity is a Good Thing, so is change! I would very much like to hear from anyone interested in serving. The main things are an enthusiasm for Gloucestershire history, a practical willingness to roll up one's sleeves, and an ability to develop contacts.

James Hodsdon
Chairman

From our County Co-ordinator

Over the past month I have been working on the economic history of Cheltenham between the development of the spa and the coming of the railway. I have been greatly assisted by Sally Self, who provided me with the fruits of her research in this area. I was particularly grateful for her notes on agriculture, as eighteenth-century agrarian history is a new area for me. I felt more confident with urban trade and industry, having spent a year two decades ago as a research assistant at the University of Wolverhampton attached to what became their Centre for the History of Retailing and Distribution. It was then that I was initiated into the use of newspaper advertisements as a source by Nancy Cox, the doyenne of retail history. In those days consulting newspapers meant scrolling sequentially through a microfilm while trying to maintain the focus on an antiquated reader squatting in the corner of our office. Now I can search the nineteenth-century Cheltenham papers from my desk and zoom in on the image with ease.

**Extensive Sale of Plate, Jewels, Watches, and
Plated Articles,
376, HIGH STREET, CHELTENHAM,
Late Mr. Riviere's.**

**MARTIN, BASKETT, AND MARTIN,
GOLDSMITHS AND WATCHMAKERS TO
THE QUEEN,**

Having taken to the above Premises and a large portion of the Stock, (selected previous to Mr. Riviere's recent sale,) offer the whole, with a few other Articles, handsome but not strictly modern, on the most advantageous terms, for Cash only.— New and Second-hand Plate, Plated Goods, Jewellery, Clocks, Watches, Works of Taste and Art, &c. *Watches, Plate, and Jewellery, repaired on the Premises.*

**** The Business at their Establishment. No. 4,
IMPERIAL CIRCUS, will be conducted as usual.**

Martin, Baskett and Martin's newspaper advertisement

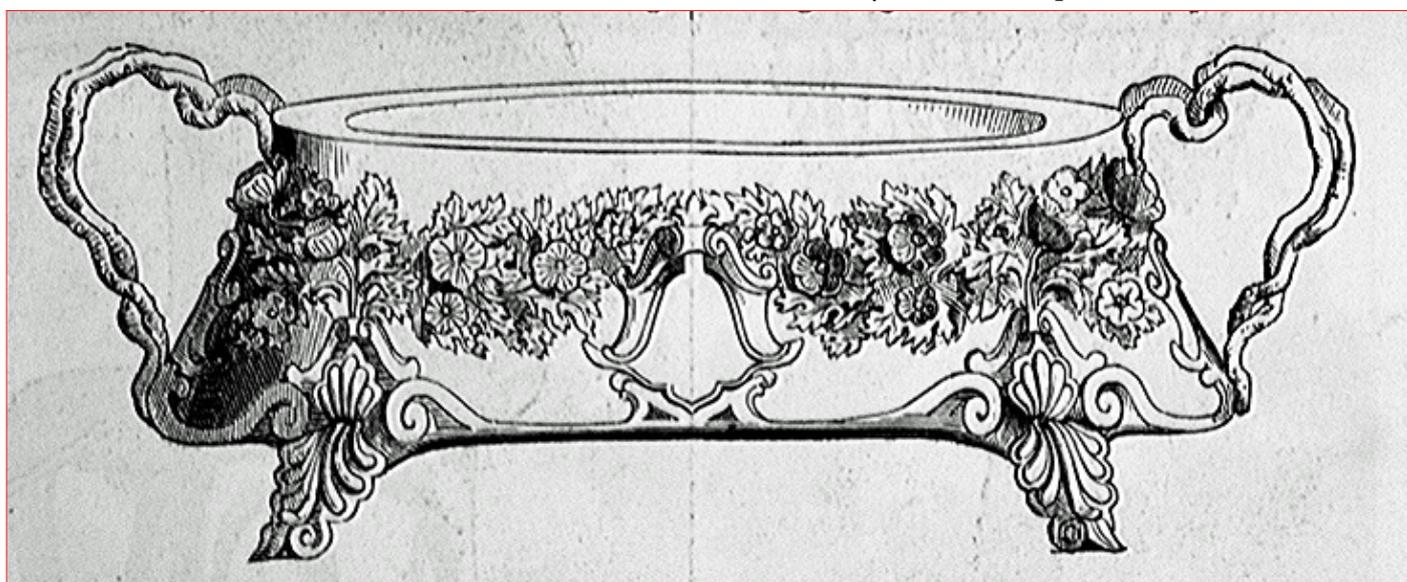
The difference this makes to research is immense, as I realised when I needed to check a reference in the *Gloucester Journal* from 1758. As the online coverage of the *Gloucester Journal* only starts in the 1790s, I was back to the microfilm reader. Thankfully Gloucestershire Archives at least has modern equipment.

Newspapers are a great resource, but they have to be treated with caution. By their nature they deal with the unusual and unexpected rather than the quotidian. This is as true of advertisements as of the rest of their copy. The butcher, baker and candlestick maker who had their shop in the same place year in year out and stocked a fairly constant range of goods had no need to advertise. The tailor or milliner who arrived from Bath for the season

needed to alert potential customers to their presence and let them know where to find them that year. Speed has always been the enemy of strict accuracy, when typesetting newspapers. Either some retailers in Cheltenham were flitting between neighbouring premises in the High Street, or the numbering was extremely fluid, or the newspapers made mistakes in their advertising copy.

Despite some problems with the numbering of retail premises, one area where newspapers have proved useful is in applying a timescale for the rise and decline of different retail areas as Cheltenham developed. As the 1810 Directory shows those shops that visitors to the spa would have entered themselves were concentrated around the Colonnade and the Assembly Rooms. The more distant parts of the High Street housed the shops with which their servants would have dealt. The gradual move of the fashionable shops from the high street to Imperial Circus, Clarence Street, the Promenade, Montpellier and Pittville Street can all be traced through their advertisements.

The tradesmen who invariably appeared in the newspapers were those who went bankrupt. Their names would be listed in the London Gazette and widely reported in the regional newspapers. There might also be a sale of their stock and household effects advertised locally. In 1843 George Elwick published *The Bankruptcy Directory*, listing in alphabetical order all the bankrupts from December 1820 to April 1843. When I searched this online, I found Cheltenham traders occurred frequently. Further analysis revealed that there were 192 bankruptcies in the town in this period, compared with 23 for Cirencester and 29 for Tewkesbury. There was a peak in 1826 (24) - 1827



An exhibit at the Great Exhibition 1851



Martin and Co's premises today (Jan Broadway)

(21). This was the period when Cheltenham's critic William Cobbett found the town 'delightfully dull' and claimed that the selling prices of houses had dropped by two-thirds. The prevalence of bankruptcies for Leamington Spa, although I haven't analysed these, suggests that it was a problem to which spa towns were particularly prone.

One surprising entry in the Bankruptcy Directory was Samuel and John Martin, silversmiths, who were declared bankrupt on 7 May 1833. Samuel Martin had started his business in Bath and began visiting Cheltenham during the season in the 1820s, taking premises in the High Street. Whatever the cause of his bankruptcy, it did not keep him down for long. He went into partnership with Thomas Baskett, trading from 4 Imperial Crescent. By 1839, when they took over the High Street business of John Riviere, they described themselves as goldsmiths and watchmakers to the queen and the company exhibited a number of items at the Great Exhibition in 1851. Martin & Co. jewellers occupy the same premises in Imperial Crescent to this day.

Jan Broadway

Co-ordinator, VCH Gloucestershire

Updates from our Volumes in Progress

Yate and the Sodburys

I have finally completed the gargantuan task of writing the histories of the three Sodbury parishes, and we hope to have the completed drafts on the Academy website soon. One of the final tasks for the project was to fill in the history of Chipping Sodbury's charities. Like many parishes, the town had a number of small dole and bread charities for the poor, and these separate funds were amalgamated as the Chipping Sodbury United Charities in 1969, but it was wound up in 1999. The ancient borough also held a number of properties in the town and surrounding parishes, which for centuries it had managed for the benefit of the inhabitants. Most important of these were the two large fields north of the town called the Mead and Stub Ridings, which had been granted to the townspeople in the 13th century. The borough also possessed a portfolio of properties known as the Town Lands, that had originally belonged to the town's medieval fraternity. Following the dissolution of the chantries in the middle of the 16th century, some of these properties, including the building now known as the Town Hall, were granted to a group of leading townsmen to hold in trust to support the poor, maintain a school, and repair the highways. This medieval inheritance was augmented in the 17th and 18th centuries by the acquisition of more properties in the Sodburys and also in nearby Wickwar. Another charitable estate in Chipping Sodbury was the Church Lands, which provided income towards the maintenance of the town's church.

The corporation of the borough, comprising a bailiff elected annually (by the 19th century often for a number of years in succession) and an undetermined number of burgesses (never more than 12), administered these charities until the late 19th century. Dissatisfaction with their dealings erupted into the public domain in 1894, with the appointment of the first town council, who immediately tried to wrest control of the Ridings from the bailiff. It was alleged that the bailiffs had awarded contracts for the bread dole almost exclusively to Anglican bakers, and that the rights of pasture in the Ridings were allotted by the bailiffs disproportionately to their customers and relatives. The discord even spread to the usually genteel world

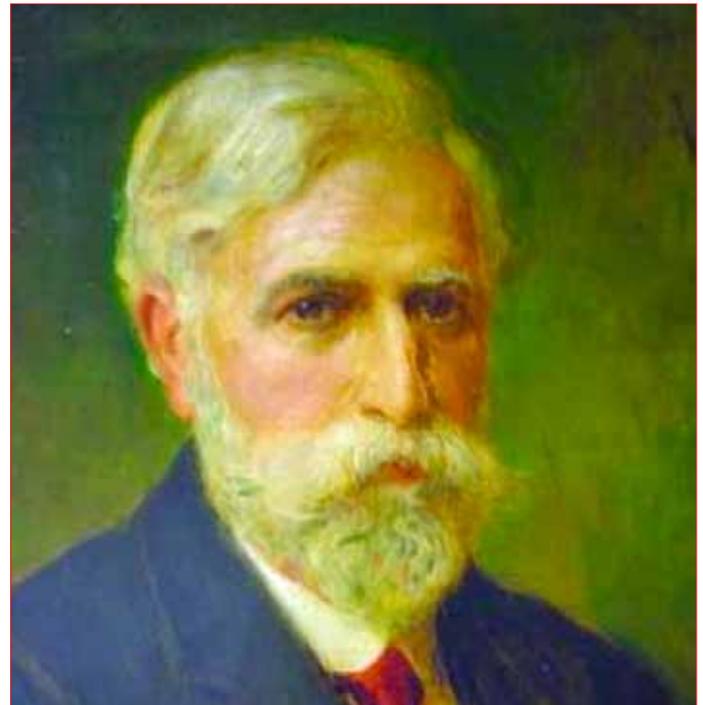
they repurchased the Town Hall and Old Grammar School, undertaking extensive refurbishment and enlargement of both, and continue to manage them for the benefit of the town. The main object of the Town Trust in the present day is to manage the Ridings, which have been converted into a number of fields for the town's sports clubs, as well as a golf course.

I was lucky recently to be invited to meet with Jim Elsworth and Nicola Gideon, respectively trustee and clerk of the Town Lands, who provided access to the large minute books covering the years 1893 to 1973, which are still in the possession of the charity. The trustees also still had in their possession a copy of the 1896 charity commission report into the former corporation, another copy of which can be found at the National Archives at Kew. This fascinating document did not only consider the contemporary management of the corporation property, but also attempted to write a detailed history of the borough, and in several appendices it illustrated this history with transcriptions of medieval deeds and 17th-century order books. It was only through perusing this report that I became aware of the loss of many important documents pertaining to the early history of the town, including a deed of 1308 which refers to a mayor of the town, and another of 1440 referring to the seal of the community. Extracts from the court rolls begin in 1672, and throw more light on the controversies between the townsmen and the lord of the manor during the brief period of the town's incorporation. Many of the documents listed in the schedule of the 1896 report, including all of the medieval deeds, were subsequently lost, so we must be very grateful to the author of the report for preserving their contents for posterity. Interestingly, none of the deeds now held by Gloucestershire Archives in the collection relating to the borough (D2071) were listed in the appendices to the report, and one must presume that they were fortunately held separately. On learning the importance of the 1896 report, Jim Elsworth immediately arranged for the transfer of the charity's copy to the archives.

It is not clear how the missing deeds came to be lost, although a terse note on the Gloucestershire Archives catalogue suggests that they were lost or embezzled by an early-20th-century clerk of the Town Trust. In considering culprits I wondered whether the author of an earlier history of the town, Francis Frederick Fox, had been responsible. His correspondence and notes relating to his antiquarian

work are held by Bristol Archives, the catalogue of which tantalisingly referred to lost deeds. Fox had even written to the Charity Commissioners in 1904 in search of these missing deeds. However, it transpired that he had been mistaken, and that the deeds he then sought were in an unmarked envelope. A letter of 1906 from the then clerk of the Town Trust confirmed the return by Fox of all of the deeds he had borrowed.

Nevertheless, in perusing Fox's correspondence, I became interested in one of the researchers he had employed, a Miss Edith Salisbury. Like many gentlemen antiquarians, Fox did not have the necessary skills to undertake his research, and so he turned to a record agent, a freelance researcher skilled in reading historic documents. Many of these were women, who had benefitted by the opening of the universities to women but who were still at that time barred from entering academia. Indeed, women like Edith played a very important role in the early history of the VCH, whose editor in 1904, William Page, ran a record agency. Professor John



William Page who was general editor of the VCH from 1902 to 1934 (VCH archive)

Beckett has studied the records of the VCH and has built up a database of 128 women who contributed towards the work of the VCH before the First World War, although he suggests that this may be a conservative figure. These women were employed to produce our famous slips, tens of thousands of paper slips containing references to original records at the Public Record Office, collected together into envelopes relating to individual parishes, and which

still form an important resource for our research today. Edith's name does not appear amongst Professor Beckett's list, although she might have undertaken research which was not published before the project went bust in 1908. She did have a connection with the VCH, however, as her older brother Edward, a clerk at the Public Record Office, was credited as an editor of *VCH Norfolk II*.

By the time Fox employed Edith in 1904 she was a very experienced researcher, having been a record agent since at least 1891, when she was aged 27. Her correspondence reveals that she charged 4d a folio (72 words) to transcribe a document in English, 6d for other modern languages, 8d for Latin, and 9d a folio to translate Latin, and 3s 6d an hour for searching in the Public Record Office or the British Museum. Despite having undertaken all of the archival work for Fox, she received no credit, not even a mention in the preface. It is not hard to find references to her work in other publications, however, but one is struck by the parsimony of the praise given to her by some of the authors whose books were founded upon her work. All who employed her were moved to praise her accuracy, and one author felt it necessary to observe that every time he had doubted Edith's accuracy he had checked the original manuscript and found that the error was not in fact hers. Fox employed Edith again in 1907 to transcribe *Adams's Chronicle of Bristol*. In a review of the volume published by BGAS, Fox was generously praised twice (his only role having been to commission the work), before the reviewer turned to commending the indexing and the quality of the Bristol printing, before in the final sentence of the review noting that Edith's work (which amounted to editing the entire volume) "seems to have been well and carefully done." Well done, that woman!

Alex Craven

1 Unless otherwise noted, all wills and inventories are to be found among the Gloucester Diocesan Records at Gloucestershire Archives.

2 TNA, PROB 11/122/319; PROB 11/127/110; PROB 11/130/101.

3 TNA, PROB 11/688/162.

Cheltenham and surrounding parishes

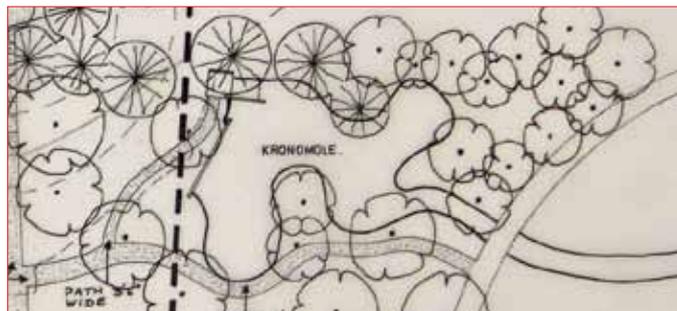
It is hard to believe but we – a group of Cheltenham Local History Society's volunteers – have been cataloguing documents at the Gloucestershire

Archives for over five years. This has involved, on every Monday that the Hub is open, entering each single document, one to each line, yes, even scraps of paper, into a spreadsheet. This information is uploaded, with a bit of adjustment by Archive staff, into the On-line Catalogue. A quick calculation arrives at around 31,000 documents already available, plus the individual articles in about 120 Dowty Social Newspapers, which will go live at the end of this year!

For those of you who have not met us on a Monday at the Hub, we are presented with an archive box of documents. If we are lucky, the contents are already bundled, soot-free, not suffering from damage by insects and/or damp and easy to open and spread out. Then the fun begins. Is it legible (Latin and secretary hand can pose problems)? Will it have parts missing? Will it finally answer that often-asked question or will it pose more questions and muddy the waters even more? It is a lottery as to what each bundle and document contain, which is where a certain 'frisson' lies!

So, what are some of the highlights of our five years of cataloguing? We have encountered 130-year running battles in the High Courts between Jesus College Oxford and the inhabitants of Cheltenham (VCH Newsletter July 2015) and the mystery of the Cade key (January 2018). There was also the 'earliest' map of Cheltenham (January 2015) believed at the time to be of around 1720. I am now pleased to be able to correct that assumption. Evidence found in later bundles suggests that the map was more likely to have been sketched between 1790 and 1810 when the Cheltenham-Gloucester tramway and the Gloucester turnpike were being considered and built (1809-10).

More recent work with accessions DC137 – Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) maps, Dowty News and D7661 – the Prinns Russell and Hunt accession (Charlton Kings), have drawn us from our seats to have a close look at the 'discovery'. The CBC maps have sent us on searches for 'kronomoles', a word that no one has yet been able to define;



the Dowty News, 1960s to mid-80s has opened our eyes to their factories in five countries, the number of their agencies around the world and the manufacture of items from minute valves to massive roof supports for mines; and in a Charlton Kings box we have uncovered a large wax seal fixed to an exemplification for the Court of Chancery 1640. The seal shows a sitting of the Lower House of Parliament and is mended in a way that intrigued Rachael Wales, conservator at the Hub – it had been stitched together apparently by making holes in the wax and binding the four parts together with thread.

Eileen Allen and I have been sent off in a new direction by John Chandler. As part of the VCH research for the parish of Swindon Village, he has suggested we write the first(?) history of an industrial and trading park, namely Kingsditch and



The 1640 repaired wax seal (Gloucestershire Archives)



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Gallagher Parks, Cheltenham. This area lies to the south of the village centre with direct connection via the A4019 to the motorways. The working title is to be 'It's Bedlam Down There'. A nice play on words as the area contained Bedlam Piece and Meadow and Priest's, or Bedlam, Mill and certainly on a Saturday morning as thousands of cars pour into the retail outlets in clouds of exhaust fumes it is indeed BEDLAM.



1923 map showing the Bedlam fields (Gloucestershire Archives)

The name 'Kingsditch' has a long history. The term is probably derived from a ditch, dug in Saxon times, to divide the King's manor of Cheltenham from the manor of Swindon¹ and the name appears regularly in manor court enrolments for land and property in Arle and Alstone. The 1840s Gloucestershire Tithe map shows fields laid out in a rectilinear pattern, running NE to SW with a scattering of buildings.² By the late 19th century and into the 20th century the area was intensively worked as market gardens interspersed with areas of fruit trees, but the demand for manpower in the two world wars presaged the slow decline of agriculture. The building of a shadow factory in WWII began the urbanisation of the area and afterwards other industries moved in - Budgetts, Vibixa and Telehoist had factories there in the 1950s. Later, the designation as Kingsditch Industrial Park and the Gallagher Retail Estate followed so that now the area is a blend of mostly low slung, one and two-storey buildings of poor design that is dominated by cars, lorries and parking for cars. Pedestrian- and lung-friendly it is not!

Returning to late 16th and 17th centuries matters, 'The Memorandum Book of John Stubbe, under-steward of the Manor of Cheltenham' has been transcribed and is now in print. It deals with three issues of importance to Cheltenham and Charlton Kings: the Cheltenham Act 1625, the stipends of the ministers for Cheltenham and Charlton Kings and the enclosure of and stints for Charlton Kings. It is a valuable primary source for the VCH and other researchers.

And so what next? It is to be four boxes of Skillicorne papers and around 40 boxes and plans of commercial and client records, mostly relating to Cheltenham and will be of use for editors of Volume 15, Cheltenham and Archives' users alike.

Sally Self

Notes

- 1 Rawes, B., Journal CLHS 6 (1988) and Journal CLHS 7 (1989)
- 2 Map information from www.kypwest.org.uk.

Cirencester and surrounding parishes

C1 is a class of Chancery record held at The National Archives which spans the medieval and early modern periods, beginning in the reign of Richard II (1377-99) and ending in the reign of Philip and Mary (1554-58). As the catalogue entry explains they 'consist solely of bills of complaint until the mid-fifteenth century, but subsequently there are also answers, interrogatories and depositions'. The catalogue also states that 'the matters in dispute are extremely varied' because there were no fixed actions. Whilst these records are of limited use in terms of writing a VCH manorial descent, despite their usual occupation with retention of writings and evidences pertaining to the ownership of a parcel of land (in which cases the record follows the pattern 'You shouldn't have that evidence. It's mine. I want it back.' and the response 'The bill of complaint was incorrectly brought. It is mine.') the C1 proceedings can reveal wonderful moments of the drama and real life that lie behind the formulaic nature of the VCH entry.

The case in point (TNA C1/298/55) concerns the manor of Stratton near Cirencester and, indeed, a request that the muniments concerning the manor

should be in the possession of the complainant, Leonard Cassy, heir to the manor, and not one Richard Pole. Richard Pole, who it turns out is Leonard's grandfather and guardian to his four year old grandson, begs to differ and his story shares with us the real sense of danger of loss of inheritance faced by minors and the fears felt by their parents. Leonard's father, William, it seems was prescient of his imminent demise and thus he brought his son Leonard to Richard Pole's house a month before his death 'desiring him to be a good grandfather to Leonard and help him keep his inheritance until of full age'. Soon after he sent his wife 'great with child' to her father this time desiring Richard 'to be a good father to her'. Fifteen days later, William was dead.

It is the travelling that conveys the drama. Studying a given location for the purposes of VCH, one can forget the toing and froing that imbued that place with life. The historic records are static, but the lives behind them aren't. Just because the records don't often allow for a telling of social history in the medieval period, doesn't mean it didn't happen!

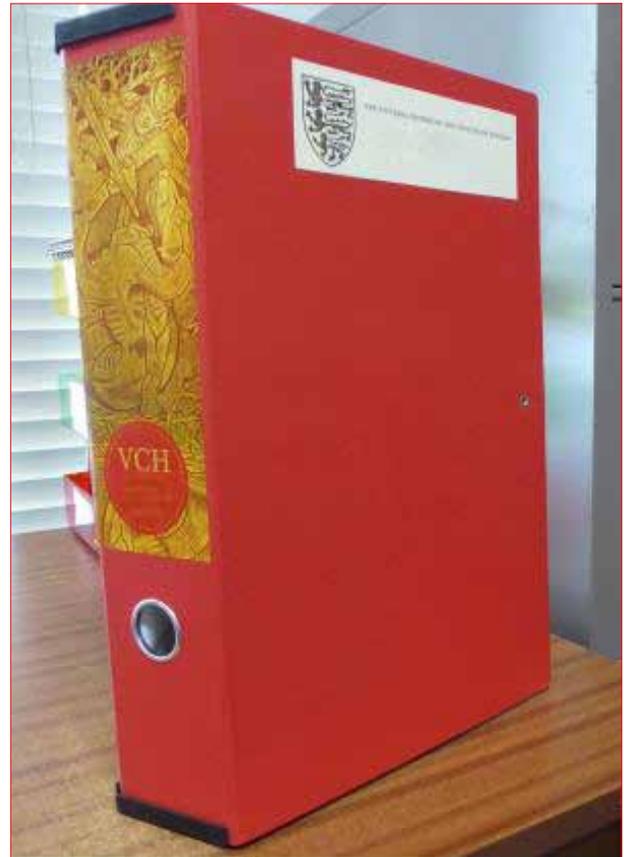
Want to know how the story ended? Well, we know Leonard lived to hold the manor and died seized of the same, but there is also a clue on the dorse of Richard Pole's response; a payment of £40 to the use of the king. So, to conclude: always look beyond the catalogue description, sometimes you will be surprised; and don't forget to PTO.

Beth Hartland

Celebrate Gloucestershire's History!

Help us mark 120 years of the VCH with the Gloucestershire Big Red Box

The VCH is marking its 120th birthday as a national enterprise with a light-hearted 'Red Box' project open to all, celebrating the history of each county. Every county with an active VCH has a Red Box modelled on the famous VCH Red Books – to be filled with as wide a range as possible of small objects symbolising some aspect of the county's history, landscape, places, and communities, from prehistory to the present. All the boxes will form part of an exhibition at the Institute of Historical Research in London in the autumn, as well as forming a permanent digital exhibition



Our Big Red Box (Jan Broadway)

We are seeking suggestions for suitable objects to place in the box that will highlight a significant theme or event in Gloucestershire's history, which you think ought to be represented. Please tell us why you think the theme or event is important. Since the box has to be transported to London and back and will be on display for some time, we need objects that are not valuable, easily breakable or perishable. For example, we already have a skein of spindle-spun wool, dyed with vegetable dye, to represent the medieval wool/cloth trade and a Dowty magazine with an Airbus on the cover for more recent industry.

Please send thoughts and suggestions (including how objects can be accessed) to janb@xmera.co.uk by Monday 12 August.

Jan Broadway

Celebrate Gloucester's History!

Gloucester History Festival 2019, Sat 7 - Sun 22 Sept

This year's Gloucester History Festival explores the theme of Power and the People as 2019 marks anniversaries including the Peterloo Massacre, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Velvet Revolution, the Tiananmen Square protests, the election of Nelson

Mandela as President and of course the first man on the moon. We explore moments of protest and change, turning points where people have fought for their political rights, shifted the balance of power, taken a giant leap for mankind and made journeys of discovery into the unknown.

Simon Draper (Assistant Editor, VCH



Oxfordshire) is speaking at the History Festival on placenames on Thursday 12th September at 7.30pm at Kings School in the Ivor Gurney hall. £5 per ticket. Early booking advised.

For full details of the festival, please see the website <https://gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk/>. Tickets are now on sale.

Heather Forbes
Head of Archives Service

And finally . . .

In 1899, a Congress of Archaeological Societies took place at Burlington House in London. The proceedings, as reported in the Bristol & Glos Archaeological Soc.'s Transactions, included this item:

34 TRANSACTIONS FOR THE YEAR 1899.

the forms provided by the Congress for cataloguing such treasures. The Congress propose to petition the Government to lower or forego the death duties on collections of family portraits as long as they remain unsold.

The Victoria Series of County Histories.—The Congress passed the following resolution: "This Congress is glad to hear of the project of a complete series of County Histories, and hopes that every assistance will be rendered by the various Archaeological Societies." This Council on their part will gladly render assistance in promoting the excellent work taken up by the publishers, Messrs. Constable and Co. They will also endeavour to learn what is being done in the matter by kindred societies.

We're still working on it 130 years later!

Gloucestershire County History Trust

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