

possible audience and so please forward it to anyone you consider may find it of interest.

My thanks go to Jan Broadway for contacting contributors and distributing the digital version of the newsletter. 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 twelfth 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 twelfth newsletter, keeping you in touch with the work of the County History Trust. You can read of the latest developments below, but please continue to check our website to read and comment upon the most recent drafts. The Trustees are anxious that the newsletter reaches the widest



*GCHT Red Book display at the launch at the Institute of Historical Research (Alex Craven).
See below for details of the launch*

VCH Gloucestershire

Newsletter 12 January 2020

Report from the Trust

On the fundraising front, the best news came almost at the end of last year, with further substantial support for Vol. 16 - the Cirencester and District Red Book project. Long-standing readers will know the Cirencester work would probably never have got off the ground, if it hadn't been for the wonderful initial grant in 2012 of £65,000 from the K D Winstone Charitable Trust, spread over four years. It was this money which paid for Beth Hartland's research on the medieval sources, and Francis Boorman's on the post-Reformation period – results now visible on the website. The Winstone Trustees made us a further grant in 2016.

I'm now very pleased to report that in December the Winstone Trust agreed to pledge an additional £25,000 towards the last stages of the research, which is now mainly on the village parishes adjacent to Cirencester and up the Churn valley. We shall be able to draw on this money in late 2020. This renewed generosity is a huge vote of confidence in the VCH project, and naturally a great spur to finishing the job as soon as we can – a point made very clear to me across the table by the assembled trustees!

Though there is a deal of research and editorial work still to be done, the general way ahead for Cirencester is thus reasonably clear, and in 2020 my attention will be mainly on scaling up the amount of work being done on Vols. 14 and 15 - the South Glos and Cheltenham projects. Don't get me wrong, the continued efforts of volunteers are *of course* helping us progress the research – some of which you can read about elsewhere in this issue - but we need to increase the pace if these large projects are to be completed in a reasonable time frame. Basically and bluntly, this means finding new money. We've been made aware of an interesting possibility of new support in the Vol. 14 area, and will be following this up as energetically as we can.

As mentioned on a previous occasion, this April it will be exactly 10 years since the trust was set up. We began back in 2010 with next to no assets besides a lot of goodwill, so the GCHT Trustees are keen to use the occasion to publicise achievements to date and blow our own trumpet a little. All in the cause of attracting if possible a new wave of support, using the time-honoured argument of 'We've got this far, now please help us finish the job.' Watch this space!

The Trust has this month appointed two new trustees, who besides bringing their professional skills will strengthen our links with the Cheltenham and South Glos areas respectively. We welcome firstly Sue Brown, a Chartered Accountant and well known to many of you through her extensive local history links, who has kindly agreed to take over the treasurer's rôle. Secondly, Rose Wallis, also well known to many of you as our former researcher and the author of *Yate*, our first 'Short'. Rose is now Senior Lecturer in British Social History, and an Associate Director of the Regional History Centre, at the University of the West of England in Bristol.

James Hodsdon
Chairman

From our County Co-ordinator

Recently I've been working up the draft of Cheltenham's economic history from 1852 to 1945, which was written by Sally Self. In the process of checking references for the Cheltenham Original Brewery in the online newspaper archive, I became distracted (an occupational hazard) by reports of their annual works outings. These were quite ambitious. In 1880 200 brewery employees, including heads of department and a band, were conveyed in horse-drawn brakes to one of the brewery's pubs in Gloucester for refreshments and then on to Newnham for the day. Two years later, as most of the local towns of historic and scenic interest had been visited over the preceding years, it was decided that the brakes should be abandoned in favour of the train. The destination of the first few train excursions was London. However, in 1886 a much more ambitious trip to Liverpool was undertaken. The attraction of Liverpool that year was the International Exhibition of Navigation, Commerce and Industry, which was opened by Queen Victoria in May. Two special trains carrying around 800 passengers left Cheltenham at 4am on a July Saturday, stopping at Derby for refreshments and reaching Liverpool at lunchtime. The trippers were provided with guides to the exhibition, for which the exhibition hall had been transported from Antwerp and set up in the Wavertree Botanic Garden. A steamer trip was also laid on, which took the trippers around the SS Great Eastern (a floating advertisement for Lewis's department store) and then on to New Brighton with its Winter Garden and other attractions. The trains left Liverpool as it got dark and arrived back in Cheltenham almost 24 hours after their departure.



Such excursions were not limited to Cheltenham Original Brewery employees and their families. Other companies were able to take advantage of the brewery's excursion to treat their own staff, the brewery invited guests to share a train carriage with the directors and members of the press went along too. Later destinations included Brighton, Portsmouth, Southampton and Plymouth. A steamer trip was often included, for example from Plymouth around the Eddystone lighthouse and from Southampton to the Isle of Wight. In time refreshments, including the brewery's own products, were served on the train.

These annual excursions were a common feature of Victorian communal life. Twenty-four excursion trains arrived in Liverpool on that July Saturday in 1886. Gradually in the course of the twentieth century they died out, being adversely affected by two world wars, the Beeching cuts and the increasing size of companies. I was, however, lucky enough as a child to experience a last hurrah of the traditional works outing. In the 1970s my

mother worked in the office of the Ercol furniture company, which chartered a train each summer to take the staff from High Wycombe for a day at the seaside. As I remember, the choice of destination was limited to a few stations that had long platforms to accommodate the train.

Jan Broadway
Co-ordinator, VCH Gloucestershire

Updates from the Volumes

Volume 14: South Gloucestershire

Since our July newsletter the drafts for Little Sodbury and Old Sodbury have been placed on our website and we are grateful for the useful comments already made by readers. (Ed.)

Volume 15: Cheltenham and surrounding parishes

'NOT ANOTHER SHEFFIELD!' - 'puffing' Cheltenham

What others think of us is often an important factor in one's life. Should we be seen as essentially attractive? energetic? industrious? While exploring material for 'It's Bedlam Down There' (the history of the commercial and retail park around Kingsditch Lane and adjacent to Swindon Village), research has revealed the mutating, and at times repetitive, ways in which Cheltenham has been publicised.

Prior to the eighteenth century, hearsay and market tittle tattle probably spoke of the excellence (or otherwise) of the town's malt, beer and inns. The discovery of Cheltenham's springs and the visit of George III changed the 'marketing' of the town from gossip into the printed word. From around the 1720s and well into the nineteenth century, Cheltenham and its waters were seriously 'puffed'. Numerous doctors, such as Drs Greville and Baird (1721) through to Saunders (1805) analysed the waters' contents and recommended them as medically sound for all ailments. Local papers also played their part: 'Tis a pleasant town, situate on fine sand, and in a fine air; and many persons of quality and distinction have been there, and received great benefit,' (*Gloucester Journal*, 1720); and in poetry ...

*And where the humble village once had been
Stand now thy sculptured buildings tow'ring high
And gilded spires that climb the azure sky
And sweeping terraces, and grand parades
And circling crescents! Oh, what place can vie ...*
(Byrne)

The town's historian, John Goding, of course praised the town and its waters, they 'have not been merely tested for a year or two ... into mere ephemeral notoriety ... their value is the tried result of the experience of a century'. (1863)

The usage of the waters at The Spaw was slow to wane, though the emphasis changed from drinking to immersion. Montpellier Baths, founded 1824, boasted that 'Ladies and gentlemen may depend on never being disappointed, even at a moment's notice' of the choice of cold, warm, salt and sulphur bathing. The Baths, still active a hundred years later, offered around ten 'experiences' - even a Pistany radio-active mud bath!

During the nineteenth century, as medicine advanced, the town began to re-invent itself as a centre for education. Cheltenham College and the Training College were both founded in the 1840s, soon to be joined by the Ladies' College in 1853. Taking these into account with the Grammar School, the National Schools, charity and infant schools, the Lord President of the Council of Education declared that 'Cheltenham had more largely provided the means of education for all ranks and classes than any other town'.

In 1876, on the incorporation of the Borough, there was serious discussion as to whether the town should be referred to as 'Cheltenham' or 'Cheltenham Spa' - the councillors' decision being that using, or not using, 'Spa' would not have particular significance, though the town still had 'the ambience of a spa town'. Both forms continue to be used to this day.

A new phrase, 'The Garden Town of England' was used in publications from c.1900. A 1906 guidebook produced by the Borough Council with the Chamber of Commerce was titled the *Garden Town and the Cheltenham Country*. This guidebook, hardback with blue binding and art deco lettering, trumpeted the town's advantages and its back cover summed them up: 'As an Educational Town, Unsurpassed; As a Health Resort (with ten descriptive statements); As a Place of Residence, Possessing Unique Advantages.' This theme

continued into the 1920s, with attempts to rival continental spa towns. A film was produced, and guidebooks and commercial advertising proclaimed 'The Carlsbad of England' and the 'Centre of the Shakespeare, Severn, Avon and Wye Country and The Gateway to the Cotswolds'.

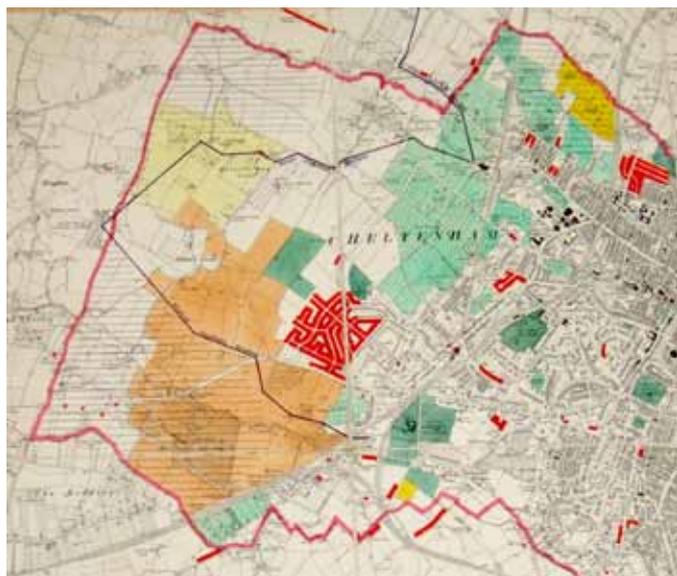


(Courtesy Mike Rigby)

The town was also promoted as a regional shopping centre. 'It is greatly commended [and] In the domain of dress, it does not, indeed, fear comparison with either London or Paris; an inspection of the magnificent windows in the Promenade ... where costumeries and modistes flourish ...'. Also, in an aside, it praises the abundance of fresh food at low prices, from the 'grazing, agricultural and fruit growing country [which] affects the household cuisines.' In some ways, the twentieth century saw little change. A post-1934 guidebook is headed 'The Charm of Cheltenham Spa' and includes specially commissioned artwork; in the 1960s and 1970s publicity included the 'Home of Health, Beauty and Entertainment ... verdant beauty, spacious tree-lined streets, shopping ... a centre for purveying the combination of health, rest, beauty and elegant entertainment ... those inestimable things which people need more and more'.

Following World War II objectives had to change - the need to rebuild, feed and employ everybody was paramount. Locally this meant that the town could no longer survive as it had previously done. It was designated one of two 'sub-regional centres' and as such it had to progress. The names of this progress were 'employment' and 'industry' - a word heartily disliked by some councillors - 'not another Sheffield!' is recorded in Borough Council minutes. The town had hosted 'industries'

from medieval times – malting, brewing, tanning, butchery and all manner of forges. However, by the mid-1920s planning maps were indicating zones set aside for particular development including industry: ‘light industry will be permitted in residential areas’ provided it was not ‘heavy or offensive or alkali’ and not likely ‘to injure amenity of the area.’ And this is the conundrum that the town’s planners faced in the twentieth century – how to preserve the quintessential atmosphere of *rus in urbe* versus national and local demands for a ‘healthy and sustainable economy’ and the need to expand ‘housing and employment land’.

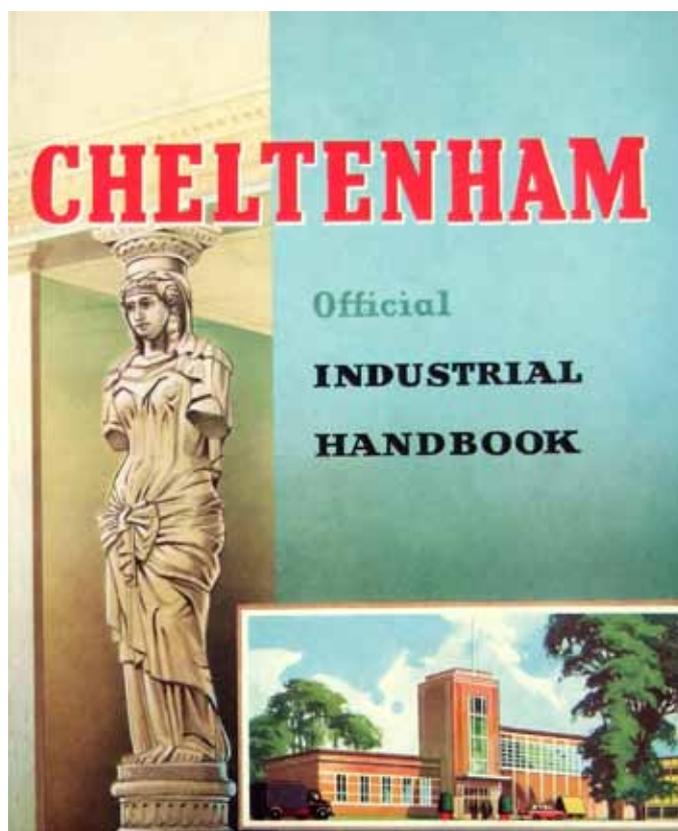


Part of the 1:10560 3rd edition OS sheets 26 and 27, 1923-24, covering the Borough and marked up to show land use (orchards, allotments and small holdings); the sewer system and housing development 1923-34 (GA: CBR/C3/1/1/4/3/1)

In 1947 the Council sent out a questionnaire to 97 small- and medium-sized businesses, mainly in central Cheltenham. The key question was who ‘would probably be interested in and likely to move to a trading estate.’ Of the 72 replies, 53 stated they would be, as most complained of unsuitable premises often tucked into residential street and housed in cramped garages or converted mews. This situation had arisen following the rapid expansion of their numbers and the scope of their production to meet the needs of war. As early as 1933, a few small areas had been earmarked for industry, one of which was Kingsditch, where, by the 1940s, five firms were trading. Further land was urgently needed as requests for sites were arriving regularly from local and national businesses. A Joint Factories’ Site Committee was formed inviting landowners to alert the council to any suitable land – it met with little success, as presumably few wanted factories in

their immediate vicinity. Consultants were called in to assess the economic potential of the town, which they stated was mainly good and capable of expansion, and they set out suitable objectives – any development should be ‘well-planned and satisfactory in every respect ... to prevent the needless incursion of workshops and business premises in the best residential districts.’ It was, it seems, acceptable to have workshops elsewhere.

Such was the need by the end of the 1950s, that alongside the many guidebooks, came the 1959 industrial handbook – *Cheltenham, Ideal Centre for Light Industry*, which aimed at re-branding the town – ‘there are a good many fallacies about Cheltenham ... [that] it stands for tradition at all costs and is deeply opposed to changes of any kind’ and goes on welcome light industry as a change for the better and pointing out the advantages of its central position, excellent road and rail network, industrial education and apprenticeships, sport, recreation and residential amenities. A further handbook of 1988, in many ways a repeat of the earlier one, sets out, through a dozen or so maps, all the industrial estates that had been established and were now being fully utilised. Kingsditch and its immediate area had 147 firms.



Cheltenham Official Industrial Handbook 1958/9 (GA: B526/47394GS)

finally being signed off and adopted. The town may not be 'another Sheffield' but the 'ambience of a Spa town' is fading.

Sally Self

Volume 16: Cirencester and surrounding parishes

St Christopher's Comings And Goings

Baunton in the Churn valley is perhaps little-known generally, though it is visited (briefly and rapidly) by thousands every day without realising it, as they hurry along the A417 to somewhere else. That fine ragged cutting of yellow Cotswold stone close to the Cirencester junction – that is in Baunton parish. Were they to turn off and explore Baunton beneath the viaduct they would discover down a dead-end lane the exquisite little church of St Mary Magdalene with its enormous St Christopher mural confronting them on the opposite wall (as images of him always do – for good luck) when you enter. This fine 15th-century painting, so we are told, was uncovered during Victorian restoration in 1876, and has since then been several times restored. For a time, and because of this discovery, we are also told, the church dedication was changed from Mary Magdalene to Christopher, and, as I have found out, there was a certain ambiguity about the dedication between 1890 and 1925, after when Mary won the day.



One major spur to industrial/commercial development in the 1960s was the change in government policy on aircraft procurement. Locally unemployment was predicted to rise by around two thousand as national companies based at Staverton closed. At county level the pressure to increase land zoned for industry was severe and was passed on to all councils. Cheltenham Borough bemoaned the shortage of available land for this purpose, sandwiched as they were between the Cotswold escarpment, Green Belt restrictions and Tewkesbury Borough. This drive led to a re-ordering of priorities in the mission statements which opened all town planning documents: 'the town should develop primarily as a light industrial, educational, shopping and residential centre ... as a health and holiday resort ... [and] promote festivals, entertainment and culture'. Light industry to the fore!

The 1971 Town and Country Planning Act required that future planning should have a statistical basis and should make projections well into the future. The Government policy to direct resources towards economic development, at local level saw the imposition of an extra 25acres (10ha) later increased to 30acres (12ha) of employment land and by 1991 a further 2,000 jobs in manufacturing, with more in the retail sector. Pressure was also exerted by such firms as Dowty, Delapena and Spirax Sarco to provide housing for the necessary skilled workers, then in short supply. By 2006, the Cheltenham Local Plan aimed to set out a balanced vision of the town. It should become an important employment centre with a strong emphasis on office work, accommodating several national and regional administrative headquarters and on the manufacturing side, a wide range of industries, with light engineering 'a speciality', in conjunction with maintaining other long-standing features. The present Joint Core Strategy, covering 2011-2031, envisages around 10,000+ new homes and in the north-west area (Swindon village/Uckington area) 4,285 new houses and 25acres (10ha) of office/commercial development.

This drive to provide employment land for industrial, commercial and later retail enterprises has continued to the present day and has led to a continuous round of County and Borough planning – County Plans, often Structured and Strategic, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Amendments with Quinquennial Reviews and Local Town Plans. All of these have to be drafted, put out to public consultation, re-written, approved at county and ministerial level before

So I was a little surprised to find in Bishop Benson's survey of the diocese between 1735 and 1750 that the dedication was then given as St Christopher. This was not the modern editor's interpolation – I checked the original and St Christopher was there. I knew from the Cirencester cartulary that Mary Magdalene was the dedicatee in the twelfth century, so could this be a later medieval change, continuing after Christopher himself had been whitewashed over and forgotten? Possibly, but a more likely explanation was provided when I scoured the Cirencester parish records (Baunton was to some extent dependent on Cirencester). In the splendid *Parish Book*, one of the Kilner manuscripts, there is a marginal note (GA: P86/1 IN 6/3 f.93v) 'The church or chapel of Baunton is dedicated to S. Christopher and about 35 years from this present 1772 the old plaister within the same wanting in some part to be renewed there was disclosed from upon it a large rude (fresco) painting of this saint. It was open for some time and attracted the curiosity of many persons till again covered over as before.'

Bad timing, St Christopher. You happened to reveal yourself a few years after Sir Robert Atkyns had been round for a look, and by the time Samuel Rudder followed suit later the same century you had disappeared again. So far as I am aware (and please correct me if I'm wrong) no-one in the eighteenth century mentioned you in print, and by 1876, when you showed up again, your brief earlier outing had been completely forgotten.

John Chandler

Siddington

Unravelling the history of Siddington has been complicated by the common medieval problem of overlapping jurisdictions. The modern parish of Siddington is a union of the two medieval parishes of Siddington St Mary and Siddington St Peter. Straddling both these parishes were the medieval manors of Siddington Musard and Siddington Langley, as well as other parcels of landholding. To add to the confusion, these manors were respectively also known as Over Siddington and Nether Siddington. The records, however, in dealing both with the parishes and the manors, do not always make these distinctions and often give Siddington as the bare descriptor.

The detailed and somewhat tortuous manorial descents can be left to the VCH Red Book volume, suffice to say here that both manors came to be held by the Langley family from 1474. Attempts have been made elsewhere to identify an intriguing

freeholding referred to as the Barbast fee with a specific parcel of land identified in Domesday Book, but I remain unconvinced on this. Perhaps the early modern history of the parish will elucidate this matter for us!

For the purposes of taxation, the medieval royal Exchequer based at Westminster regarded Siddington as one entity. Taking evidence from royal taxation in 1327 and a manorial extent in 1326 it is possible to demonstrate that the unfree tenants of Siddington Musard had varying incomes and that some of them were better off (in monetary terms) than at least one free tenant.

Daglingworth

Daglingworth is the parish I am currently working on. The Daglingworth panels really caught my attention from the outset and recent commentators have suggested that may point to an early important ecclesiastical history for the parish in the Romano-British or early Anglo-Saxon period. This contrasts with the less imposing position occupied by Daglingworth in certain medieval documentary records: in the royal taxation of 1327, for example, Daglingworth is considered a member of the manor of Stratton. These two snapshots justify the VCH method: one historical source alone cannot tell the history of a place. There is more than one facet to the Daglingworth story.

Beth Hartland

More on Daglingworth (with Bagendon)

For the last six months, I have been working on the modern history of Bagendon and Daglingworth, two of the long, narrow parishes north of Cirencester. These will form part of Vol. 16, together with Cirencester and Stratton, already drafted by Francis Boorman; Baunton, currently being researched by John Chandler, and Coates, the Duntisbournes, and Preston, which all remain to be researched. As ever, Beth Hartland has been researching the medieval histories of all of these parishes.

In these first six months I have focused most on the landownership, local government, social history, landscape and settlement patterns in the two parishes. With both Bagendon and Daglingworth having absentee lords of the manor for much of their history, one theme that has emerged strongly from both parishes is the prominence of the leading yeomanry families who lived and

farmed in them. Pre-eminent amongst them was the Haines family, branches of whom appear to have held estates across the whole region. Their longevity is striking. In the middle of the sixteenth century, John Heynes was the tenant of Cirencester Abbey's four yardlands (yardland was approx. 40 acres [17ha]) in Daglingworth. Through careful cultivation of their estate and judicious marriage with their neighbours, by the middle of the nineteenth century Edward Haines owned most of the parish and occupied the 17th-century Manor Farm. By this date, the family also owned the large Moor Wood mansion house and a large estate in Bagendon, and other lands in Duntisbourne Rous. Unsurprisingly, members of the family have always been amongst the wealthier occupants of the parishes: Richard Heynes was the third wealthiest parishioner assessed in Daglingworth in 1524, and John Haines could make bequests in his 1631 will worth a total of £269.

Until the eighteenth century, however, the family was eclipsed in wealth by their neighbours, the Hancocks. In 1524 Richard Hancock was assessed at £25, worth more than the other five parishioners together, and in 1661 five members of the Hancock family were among the eleven wealthiest parishioners. The proximity of Cirencester provided further opportunity for individuals from this well-heeled family to consolidate their position. Giles Hancox, a younger son, was established in the town as a mercer, using the wealth he acquired to purchase the family estates whilst continuing his trade. When he died in 1684, his total estate was worth £585, including plate worth £28, a rare luxury item occurring in the inventories of the parish at this time. In the eighteenth century the Hancox estate was divided between the families of two sisters, one of whom had married a Haines and the other a Hinton. The continued wealth and confidence of the occupants of Bagendon and Daglingworth is revealed by the substantial houses that they have erected since the eighteenth century: not only the new mansion at Moor Wood, but also the new Manor House and two new rectory houses (now called Bagendon House and the Old Rectory) in Bagendon, and Daglingworth House, Daglingworth Place, the former rectory (now called Chantry House), and the Manor House in Daglingworth. The enclosure of the large open fields in the eighteenth century was also the occasion for the construction of

modern farms at a distance from the traditional area of settlement, at Pewett's Hill in Bagendon and near Overley Wood in Daglingworth.

These modern farms and their medieval antecedents will be the next area of focus as I turn to research the economic history of these parishes. Remarkably, although, it seems that in Daglingworth the distinct buildings and parcels of land that had comprised the separate holdings of the medieval peasants continued to be distinguished from each other, even as the land in these two parishes was gradually consolidated into the hands of a small number of owners. This may enable the tracing of each holding as far back in some cases as the fourteenth century. I will also be writing the religious history of each parish, which will give me the opportunity to elaborate upon the violent treatment meted out to the Puritan rector of Bagendon in the months before the Restoration of 1660, and to explore why his contemporary Robert Humphries, rector of Daglingworth for 52 years, was called a hard, miserable person by one of his parishioners after his death in 1675.

Besides working on these parishes, I was pleased to be able to attend the launch event for the VCH's Red Box exhibition at the Institute of Historical Research, intended as both a celebration of the project's 120th anniversary and its contribution to the annual *Being Human* festival. Each of the counties with currently active projects was provided with a red box file in which they were asked to include items which represented their history. These collections were then 'unboxed' and displayed prominently in the corridors of the IHR. Besides items and images collected by the county teams, a 3D printer also enabled the recreation of more artefacts, especially models of items that were too large to include in real life. This printer was still in operation on the evening of the launch, quietly whirring in the corner as it printed a miniature replica of a printing press. There was also a short panel, with papers by Adam Chapman of VCH central office, who had put together a Red Box for Norfolk even though the county's project had stalled more than a century ago, and Charlotte Young, VCH's newest recruit as a contributing editor, who had picked out some highlights from her initial research about Towcester in Northamptonshire. Besides these formal papers, a roving microphone enabled contributions from the floor, including Gloucestershire's former assistant editor Simon Draper, discussing his favourite item from Oxfordshire's collection. The exhibition can be viewed at the IHR until February, but there is also an

online gallery of each county's collection for those who cannot travel to London.

Alex Craven

More on the Red Box Exhibition

Last year marked the 120th anniversary of the VCH and all the active counties were asked to contribute to an exhibition to celebrate the occasion. Consequently, late last spring I received a red box file with the spine fashioned to look like a Big Red Book and was asked to fill it with objects, which told the history of Gloucestershire in quirky and imaginative ways. There followed a few months of my quizzing all and sundry among my acquaintances on what objects they would use to represent the history of Gloucestershire. This included not just people involved in the VCH, but also friends who regard my interest in local history as mildly eccentric. Sadly many of the objects suggested were either too large to fit in the box or unsuitable – lamprey pie and a pint of elvers, anyone? An appeal in the last newsletter elicited a timber core sample from the Folk Museum in Gloucester (the management of which has recently been taken over by the Gloucester Civic Trust). My own contribution was a rather battered copy of *Cider with Rosie*. Laurie Lee's book represented my main impression of Gloucestershire before moving here in 1985 – an impression that was somewhat reinforced on my first day at work in Stroud, when I was told my new boss and several colleagues that they would not be in until late as it was May Day and they'd been out morris dancing at dawn. My thanks to everyone who contributed ideas and items.

You can see all twelve of the items I eventually chose in a permanent virtual exhibition on the VCH website: <https://www.history.ac.uk/research/centre-history-people-place-and-community/chppc-red-boxes-gallery>.

Jan Broadway

English Places

English Places was formally launched on 16 January. This is the exciting new app from the Victoria County History, which puts authoritative histories of places across England at your fingertips, whether you're browsing at home or out and about exploring. Here is the link: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.victoriacountyhistory>

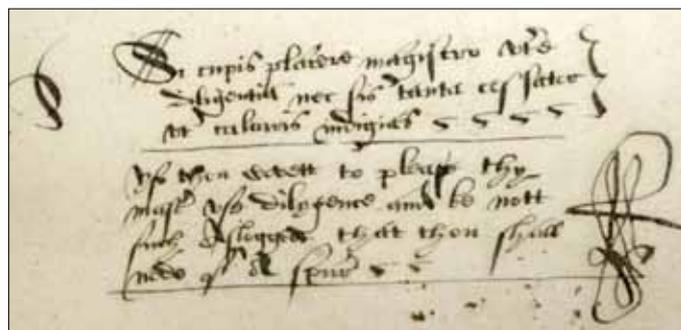
Jan Broadway

From the Archives

“If you wish to please your master...”

The Cheltenham Local History Latin Group continues to work through the manor court records of the 1570s (GA: D855/M2), which survive only as abbreviated very rough notes, mostly Latin. Some of the more accessible passages were used in our VCH Short *Cheltenham before the Spa*, but the plan is to go patiently through the whole thing and recover any remaining nuggets of information, as potential additions to the future Vol. 15 – besides making the transcript available in a searchable version at some future date.

At Michaelmas 1573, the end of the manorial year, the steward totted up the year's income - a healthy £38 11s 8½d - and found he was left with a blank half page. Waste not, want not, he thought (I imagine), and to show off his true power of penmanship, he inserted the following:



The Latin reads *Si cupis placere magistro, ut diligetiam nec sis tantu' cessator ut calcaris indigias*, which the clerk renders in idiosyncratic English as *Yf thou covett to please thy master, use diligence and be nott such aslogged [ie, 'a sluggard?'] that thou shall nede of a spur.* The Latin struck me as possibly proverbial, and worth trying out on Mr Google, who quickly obliged with numerous examples, all taken from school Latin grammars. (The sentence demonstrates that some verbs, such as *placere*, take the dative rather than the accusative case.) Pursuing this a little further, an expert friend put me onto William Lily (d.1522), compiler of *Rudimenta Grammatices*, which first appeared in print in 1534, and is the first to contain this example sentence. While the Latin remains constant, the English version does vary slightly over the years. An edition of Lily's book would surely have been found in Cheltenham's first grammar school, but – assuming of course that the annotation is contemporary with

the rest of the book - the clerk who made the entry above must have studied elsewhere: Richard Pate's school did not open till the following year.

James Hodsdon

And finally . . .

Books At The Hub

Everyone wants the new Heritage Hub to be as convenient and researcher-friendly as possible, and there had been murmurings since it opened that fewer reference books were available than previously on open access in the searchroom, and some of those that were still there were difficult to find. To address some of these criticisms Paul Evans, Liz Jack and I took advantage of the Christmas closure to rearrange the stock, and to replace some little-used books with others from the strongrooms more useful to researchers, including where possible titles on the VCH checklists.

In the Hockaday Room not a great deal has changed. There are sequences of works on Gloucestershire places arranged alphabetically, then by broad subject, then more generally and by area. But all along the top shelves we have restored the run of the *Transactions of the Bristol & Glos Arch Soc*, and there are other heavily-used local journals, including *Glos Notes & Queries*.

In the main searchroom we have been more radical. Each bay of shelving is now numbered (1-9) and there is as logical a progression as we could achieve, from Bay 1, transcripts, Bays 2 and 3 trade directories (which we have augmented), Bays 4 and 5 biographical sources including peerages and alumni, Bay 6 family and local history reference books and guides to research, Bay 7 place-names, VCH and maps, Bay 8 Glos Record Series and language dictionaries, Bay 9 old photograph books and the *Cheltenham Chronicle*. The *Oxford English Dictionary* and dialect dictionary run along the bottom shelves of Bays 7-9.

Some oversize books and some journals (including *Glevensis* and the Cotteswold Field

Club *Proceedings*) are available in the Frith Room when it is not occupied, as well as the archive paper catalogues. The VCH volumes for neighbouring counties are in the Elrington room. A leaflet describing the new arrangement in more detail is available from the helpdesk.

Of course the open access stock is only a fraction of the Hub's library holdings. Much of the rest has been moved to the new strongroom adjacent to document control and can be ordered via the catalogue in the usual way. We hope that you will approve of these changes.

John Chandler

Gloucestershire County History Trust

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Miss Sue Brown (Hon. Treasurer)
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