



# Gloucestershire Local History Association

Newsletter No. 4 November 2013



*The Mighty Hal Bagwell of Gloucester.*

## **With News From...**

Bledington Local History Society, Gloucestershire Archives, Stroud Local History Society, Tewkesbury Historical Society, Victoria County History and Winchcombe History Group.

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## Updates from the GLHA

Welcome to our fourth newsletter. It's been almost a year since we began and each issue has been a learning curve – you may have noticed that they've all been slightly different from the one before. We're still experimenting to get the right 'look' for the newsletter, and have also pushed this issue back a month so we could include a report on the Local History Day and congratulate the winner and runner-up of the Bryan Jerrard Award.

We have encouraged groups to send articles about special events or projects rather than their regular meetings. Please continue to send details of your regular events programme to Ray Wilson for inclusion on the website. Instructions on the required format can be found on the website.

[www.gloshistory.org.uk](http://www.gloshistory.org.uk).

We have also included the 'Guidance for Contributions' which aims to advise groups on how best to submit their articles. The purpose of this is to bring articles from various groups together under a single, familiar style, improving the newsletter and hopefully making it easier for the submitters. If you have any queries regarding submitting a piece for the newsletter, please feel free to contact me at [ben.berry4@btinternet.com](mailto:ben.berry4@btinternet.com)

Finally I'd like to thank everyone whose hard work has helped to build this newsletter, especially those who have submitted articles. See you all next year!

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## GLHA Forum, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2013

Twenty-three people, representing 21 of the Association's members, attended the quarterly Forum meeting at Gloucestershire Archives on 5 September. The meeting began with a presentation by Marion Hearfield about the research project into the life of William Cowle of Stroud and the development of Stroud's Field Estate, an account of which was included in our July 2013 Newsletter. An exhibition about the project, sponsored by Stroud Local History Society, was held at Stroud's

Museum in the Park during October. Marion's book, *William Cowle of Stroud: Life in a Victorian town*, published by The Friends of Stroud District Museum, ISBN: 9780952114925, £12, is available now.

The Forum also received a report from Carol Harris on the progress of the recently-established Winchcombe History Group, and in particular their involvement with Winchcombe Museum and the Winchcombe Arts Festival, and their plans to research the impact of the First World War on the town. A fuller report on the Group's activities may be found elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The Forum also received reports on future plans for Gloucestershire Archives and the County History Trust, both given by Heather Forbes, the County & Diocesan Archivist, who is also a trustee of the County History Trust.

The Chairman reported on several forthcoming GLHA activities, including plans for the Local History Day on 12 October. He was particularly pleased to report that the joint bid for funding for activities to commemorate the centenary of the First World War (in which GLHA is a partner along with the Everyman Theatre, Gloucestershire Archives, the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum, Cheltenham Museum, the History Press and the Gloucestershire Family History Society) had been successful, with a total budget of over £86,000 from several sponsors, most notably the Heritage Lottery Fund. This would include funding for the Association's October 2014 History Day, which would focus on the impact of the War on Gloucestershire communities, and which it is hoped will be organised in conjunction with the History Press. Further details would be available in due course.

The 'behind the scenes' tour and archive display that had been organised for the Association by Gloucestershire Archives on 19 August had been attended by 30 members. As there was also a waiting list, a further tour has been organised for 13 January 2014 – details of how to book have been emailed to GLHA members. The Chairman expressed the GLHA's thanks to Vicky Thorpe, Sarah Aitken and Helen Timlin of the Archives staff for organising the tour.

The Treasurer reported that the Association's finances were sound, with current assets of £1,030. His aim was to achieve and maintain a balance of £1,500 in our account. The Association currently has 42 members and it was hoped that the four 2012-13 members who had not yet renewed would do so.

The Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking Gloucestershire Archives for hosting the meeting.

## GLHA Local History Day, October 12<sup>th</sup> 2013

More than 100 people attended the Association's first Local History Day, which was held at Pate's Grammar School in Cheltenham on October 12<sup>th</sup>.

The theme of the day was 'Gloucestershire's Special Houses', and featured four speakers on the chosen theme – Stephen Hague on Frampton Court and Cote House (near Wesbury-on-Trym), Chris Hobson on Fairford Park, Steve Hill on Stratford House and Park, Stroud, and Averil Kear on Nass House and Highmeadow, Forest of Dean.

Sixteen local history groups and societies prepared displays on the chosen theme and those attending were asked to vote for their favourite display, the winner being Chipping Campden History Society, which will receive free membership of the GLHA for 2014-15.

In addition to the 'special houses' displays, there were also stands from Gloucestershire Archives, the County History Trust and the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, while Geoff and Elaine North provided their ever-popular second hand bookstall.

Refreshments – organised by Alison Hobson - were available throughout the day, and we are grateful to Alison, and to Shirley Dicker and Louise Scriven, for providing splendid home made cakes (which figured very positively in our Evaluation Forms!). Thanks are also due to those people who 'stepped in' to help serve teas when things got particularly busy!

The day also included the presentation of this year's Bryan Jerrard Award, details of which are included elsewhere in this Newsletter. We were delighted that Bryan was able to travel from Hampshire to present the Award, and are especially grateful to him for sponsoring the 2013 Award, by funding book tokens for the winner and the runner-up.

The Association is very grateful to the many people who helped to make the day a success, notably the four speakers, each of whom had given freely of their time, and in particular to Stephen Hague, who had driven over especially from Oxford, where he was staying on a short research visit from the United States. We are also most grateful to all those groups and societies who had put so much time and effort into the preparation of their displays and stands. Special thanks are also due to Committee

members Alison Hobson (and family!), Vicki Walker and David Scriven for their hard work both before and during the event, and to the many others who turned out to 'lend a hand' at various times, including Shirley Dicker, Paul Evans, John Putley, Stuart Manton, Dave Walton and Ray Wilson. We are also grateful to Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum and to Cheltenham Civic Society for the last-minute loan of much-needed extra tables, and to the staff of Pate's for their help and advice before the event.

Next year's Local History Day will be held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2014 and will focus on the effects of the First World War on Gloucestershire communities: further details will be available in due course, and the Committee will be 'taking on board' the many helpful suggestions for improving and developing the event that were made in the Evaluation Forms.

And don't forget.....

Before then, we shall have our second GLHA Summer Afternoon, which will be hosted by the Forest of Dean Local History Society on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2014. Further details will be available in due course.

Steven Blake  
Chairman  
GLHA

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## The Bryan Jerrard Award 2013

This is an annual award for what the judges believe to be the best published article on an aspect of Gloucestershire's local history during the preceding year. It is named after Bryan Jerrard, who served as Chairman of the Gloucestershire Community Council's Local History Committee (now replaced by the GLHA) between 1978 and 1998.

**In making their choice, the judges consider the following criteria:**

The amount and quality of original research undertaken.

The contribution that the article makes to local history in Gloucestershire and, where appropriate, the extent to which it puts the topic into a wider Regional or National context.

The style and presentation of the article including, where appropriate, the use of maps, plans and illustrations, and the inclusion of footnotes (endnotes) and a bibliography.

**The winner of the 2013 Award** is Diane Charlesworth, 'Medieval Tibberton', *Glevensis* **44** (2011).

**A Runner Up Prize** was awarded to Michael Hare, 'Deerhurst's Earliest Patrons', *Transactions of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* **130** (2013).

Congratulations to them both!

**The other finalists were as follows -**

Benson, Derek, 'The Tewkesbury Bread Riot of 1795', *Tewkesbury Historical Society Bulletin* **22** (2013)

Evans, David, 'The Vizards of Dursley', *The Dursley Lantern* **9** (2012)

Hudson, Janet, 'Oldends Hall', *Stonehouse History Group Journal* **3** (2012)

Mayo, Cheryl, 'Pageants, prayers and pins: how Foresters celebrated the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953', *The New Regard of the Forest of Dean* **27** (2013)

Morris, Pat, 'John James, Ironmaster', *Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology Journal* **40** (2011)

Rowbotham, Sue, 'Carroll's Adventures in Cheltenham', *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* **29** (2013)

Self, Sally, 'Linking the Records: the Apothecary's Tale', *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* **29** (2013)

Wilkinson, Tom, 'Did the Purchase of Tewkesbury Abbey Reflect the Continuation of Traditional Catholic Belief?', *Tewkesbury Historical Society Bulletin* **22** (2013)

# Guidance for Contributors to the GLHA Newsletter

The Newsletter is published online quarterly, normally in January, April, July and October.

## **Aims**

- √<sup>1</sup> To update member groups on GLHA business.
- √<sup>1</sup> To report on events held by GLHA.
- √<sup>1</sup> To alert member groups to special events taking place within the county.
- √<sup>1</sup> To report on special events held by member groups.
- √<sup>1</sup> To review local history resources.

## **Reports by Member Groups**

Reports and announcements from member groups about local history activities that may be of interest to the wider membership are always welcome. Examples of suitable contributions are:

- √<sup>1</sup> An article detailing a particularly successful event organised by your group. It could include contact details for more information about places visited or speakers recommended.
- √<sup>1</sup> Details about a special project your group is involved in with advance dates of exhibitions, Local History days, etc.

Please don't simply list or report on the programme of regular meetings arranged by your group.

## **Articles**

These can be brief – 250 words – or up to 600 words for a major event.

If your article is written in the first person then please include the name of the author. If you do not wish to include the author's name then it is more appropriate to depersonalise it.

The editors reserve the right to edit your work. Any major revisions will be returned for your approval.

Please send photographs to illustrate your article wherever possible. A good quality jpg (approx 300 pixels per inch or 1200 pixels wide) needs to be emailed to the editor. Please include a caption with names of people featured wherever possible.

## **Special Projects or Events**



Include a description, cost per person, date, time and location, and a method to book a place if relevant.

### **Reviews**

We would be delighted to receive reviews of books, DVDs or other resources useful to local historians. These need not necessarily be new books but anything members would like to recommend to a wider audience. The review should be no longer than 500 words and should include bibliographical details.

Please submit your contributions to the editor Ben Berry [ben.berry4@btinternet.com](mailto:ben.berry4@btinternet.com) and copy to Mary Sullivan at [sullivan469@btinternet.com](mailto:sullivan469@btinternet.com)

### **Regular events**

Regular events should be submitted to the website [www.gloshistory.org.uk](http://www.gloshistory.org.uk) where you can find details of how to submit your events.

### **Publicity**

In addition, GLHA will advise member groups by email of local history events or resources that might be of interest to the whole membership. The membership email list will not be used for marketing purposes nor will it be made available to third parties. It will only be used for disseminating information that is relevant to the aims of the Association. If you have anything that you would like to be emailed to the whole membership, please send it to the Secretary, Vicki Walker, at [walkeravsj@aol.com](mailto:walkeravsj@aol.com) for onward transmission.

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## Members' News

### **Bledington Local History Society**

*Cottage Histories in Bledington, Gloucestershire* is a new book by Michael Weller compiled from intensive research over the past few years. Published by Bledington Local History Society, it is a sequel to *Farms and Farm Holdings in Bledington, Gloucestershire 1770-1970* published in 2008. In that book the evolution of the land holdings of the 17 principal farms was described, following the enclosure of the parish in 1769. The new book tells the stories of some 80 old cottages in the village, providing a fascinating and detailed account of their owners and occupiers over 300 years, with passing reference to more recent developments.



The research is based upon many bundles of old deeds and other documents, notably wills and sale catalogues, accessible thanks to the expertise of the staff at Gloucestershire Archives, the Oxfordshire Record Office and the National Archives, and also through the generosity of local residents and others.

The author is indebted to Sylvia Reeves for her expertise derived from managing Bledington Local History Archives so effectively for many years and to the support of chairman Richard Faircliff and all committee members, not least Gillian Truslove for her proof-reading skills and secretary/treasurer Rollo Bruce. Member Stuart Miles' sustained work on census and other records of Bledington and his detailed knowledge of many Bledington families has been invaluable, as has his help in preparing the final copy for printing.

The histories of the principal farms in the parish between 1770-1970 are not repeated apart from two former farmhouses later known as the Five Bells and the Old Bakehouse in Church Street that became sites for cottage building in the 19th century. Some earlier farmhouses, notably in today's Main Street and Chapel Lane, ceased to exist as such before 1770 and knowledge of their origins faded as they became sub-divided into cottages, or new cottages were added to accommodate the increasing numbers of farm workers and later railway workers as the 19th century progressed.

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## Gloucestershire Archives

Change to Saturday morning arrangements from 5<sup>th</sup> October.

We are open on a Saturday morning between 9:00 and 1:00 and you are welcome to visit the Searchroom to use the resources we hold.

What is changing?

From Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October you will need to pre-order the documents you want to use before your visit. Please let us know by the Thursday if you would like to see up to 3 items. For larger orders, please give us at least a week's notice.

How do I make a pre-order?

The easiest way is to email us [archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk) the reference numbers of each of the documents you'd like to see. You can pre-order up to 3 documents by phone or you can leave the completed document request chits with us during an earlier visit.

How do I find the document references?

You can check our online catalogue [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives) and select 'Online Catalogue'

Are any documents available on microfilm or microfiche?

Yes! Many of the most often used sources like parish registers, wills and newspapers are available as self-service microfilms or fiche. There is a downloadable guide to the self-service sources on our website [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/researchguide](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/researchguide).

How can I find which parish registers are available on film or fiche before I visit?

You can check the parish register guide on our website [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/parishes](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/parishes) to see which registers have been filmed and which you will need to order before you visit.

I've got some documents on your waiting shelves – can I see these?

Yes! Please ask a member of staff to bring them out for you.

Do I need to pre-order documents for other days in the week?

No! It will save you time if you pre-order since the documents will be waiting for you when you arrive. You can order more documents during your visit

Tell us what you think

We'd like know what you think of this change so please talk to a member of staff or leave a note for Vicky Thorpe, the Customer Services Manager. You can also email Vicky

[vicky.thorpe@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:vicky.thorpe@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

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### Stroud Local History Society

Stroud Local History Society linked in with Stroud County Show in July by mounting an exhibition of past and present projects undertaken by society members. The exhibition was made possible through the ready co-operation of the Museum in the Park, which permitted the use of Gallery II for the weekend of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>.

Displays were varied. Jenny Bailey's contribution included a survey of the Summer Street District of Stroud, its history and the story of its community life; also a study of immigration into the district by people of eastern European descent.

Susan and Barry Harrison covered Sport in Gloucestershire through the centuries, local connections with the Napoleonic Wars, Railway Reminiscences and the Uplands, Stroud. There was also a display on Thomas Hughes, 1742-1813, who kept weather records in Stroud from 1771 up to the year of his death: *The man who took Stroud's temperatures.*

Marion Hearfield contributed to the exhibition with material concerning the major research project



*One of the displays at the joint exhibition.*

she and Tony Macer have undertaken into William Cowle, a nineteenth century benefactor of Stroud, whose life, business interests, pastimes and property developments in the upper part of the town are the subject of a new book and an exhibition at the museum in October.

Howard Beard displayed project work, mostly based around early photographs, of local Edwardian events such as the 1907 visit of the County Agricultural Show, the great 1911 Mid-Gloucestershire Historical Pageant of Progress and George V's Coronation; also scenes from a century ago of Stroud shops and street scenes, together with letterheads and humorous postcards.

Around 270 people visited the exhibition, which appears to have been much enjoyed.

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### **Tewkesbury Historical Society**

Heritage Lottery Fund Award: *Researching & Publishing Biographies of all those killed in World War I in Tewkesbury.*

The Society has been awarded money for the following projects:

1. Tewkesbury Historical Society
  - I. To produce a book of biographies of Tewkesbury War Dead: publication date June/July 2014: £2,700.
  - II. To produce a digital record of all biographies for use as a teaching aid in School at KS3 level: £300.
2. Jointly with Tewkesbury School
  - I. Talk by John Dixon and others to relevant assemblies in the school in advance of:
  - II. An exhibition of student work produced by Y9 students studying WWI to be presented in the Town Library at or after Remembrance Day 2013 (the aim being to raise awareness of the project in the wider community and to generate further information): £500.
  - III. A visit to the Imperial War Museum to see the 1914 Exhibition in the summer of 2014, subsidising the cost of transport so that pupils may participate irrespective of family circumstances: £500.

## **Victoria County History**

*Written by David Aldred*

Progress on completing Volume XIII is continuing well. John Chandler has completed the draft on Hartpury and has started on Norton parish. Simon Draper has completed Sandhurst parish in draft. Rose Wallis has now completed the economic history section on Yate for Volume XIV and has embarked on the religious history section. John has also met a group from GLHA at the Archives, which both parties found very valuable.

The Trustees have recently appointed John as part-time editor-in-chief for the county on a three year contract. In this role he has already overseen the setting up of working parties to guide the proposed volumes on Cheltenham and Cirencester. He has also drawn up extensive guidance for each volume to help the researchers and writers. These frameworks have enabled the Trustees to advertise for a medieval historian and by the time this newsletter appears they hope to have made an appointment from a very strong field. Details of the proposals for Cheltenham and Cirencester can be found on the VCH website.

John has also been able to develop the Trustees' wishes of building upon the expertise of the local history community and so he arranged taster sessions on the VCH at Gloucestershire Archives; one on the afternoon of 30<sup>th</sup> September, repeated on the morning of 28<sup>th</sup> October. The purpose of these sessions is to explain to volunteers not only what is needed to research written sources for the VCH, but also what is needed to write the research up in the VCH style.

Finally the Trustees would like to thank the local history community for its continuing support.

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## **Winchcombe History Group**

*Written by Carol Harris*

I began some years ago trying to identify the 77 men named on the Winchcombe war memorial, listed only by surname and initial. The plan was to put the information into the museum, which occupies part of the Town Hall. Using newspapers for information led not only to useful details and photographs, but increased interest in the general history of the town. This led to other sources, such as the collections of Red Cross staff in the museum, and more photographs to be scanned and recorded. Some local families and collectors kindly allowed their photographs to join the increasing



collection of scanned pictures of the town and its residents.

In 2012, a small group decided to establish a history group in the town and a few of the photographs were displayed in the Methodist Hall to arouse interest in the project. After the group took off - more successfully than we had expected - another bigger exhibition was used at the Christmas Festival to collect money for urgent Town Hall repairs. The third exhibition in May attracted over 800 visitors, and more offers of photographs. These have in turn led to more information, such as the history of the Winchcombe Scout troop after a 1910 photograph was displayed at the Country Show.



*Horse fair in North Street around 1880*

I am hoping that members of the History Group with more expertise will help organise and conserve the growing collection which can be used to illustrate the history of the town and eventually improve the museum displays.



*Scout Camp at Corndean 1910*

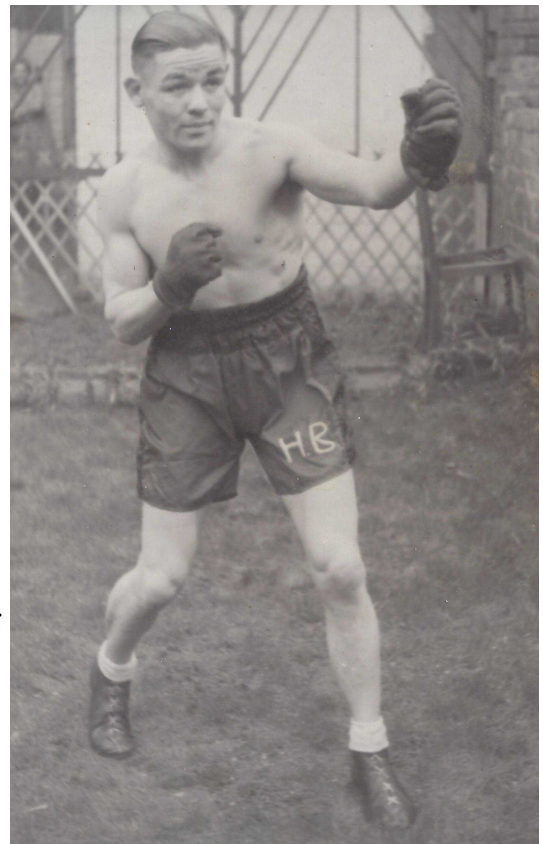
## Hal Bagwell, The Boxer of Gloucester

A special request by Jerry Jenkinson of Gloucester Local History Society.

I am currently writing a book to raise money for a statue for a boxer from Gloucester. I am hoping that people with any information, memories or pictures will get in touch with me at [jdjenkinson@hotmail.com](mailto:jdjenkinson@hotmail.com)

Harold Douglas Bagwell, known as Hal, was born in 1918. In his childhood he was called Bubbles; people in Gloucester referred to him as 'Baggy'.

Hal was born into abject poverty. He awoke one morning to hear his Mother crying. When he asked why, she told him, "I have nothing for your breakfast; there is no food or money". One of his neighbours was a retired boxer, Billy Wagner, Middle Weight Champion of the South West. Billy had two sons, Billy Jnr and Peter. They were Hal's age and both boxers. Hal told his parents he would get money by boxing.



*The mighty Hal Bagwell of Gloucester.*

Hal entered the ring at 13, won and was paid five shillings, which he gave to his Mother for food. He wore football shorts and daps as he couldn't afford any kit. He fought between 200 and 300 bouts, most of which were not recorded. His first official fight was in 1935, when he was 17 years old. Hal also fought for the Territorials and the Gloucestershire Regiment as well as in boxing booths.

Hal was at Dunkirk and later D-Day; he almost lost his life at both. Between Dunkirk and D-day he fought to earn money for Prisoners of War and the Red Cross. He was at Arnhem and the Battle of the Bulge.

After leaving the Army, he continued with his boxing career. He was offered a four figure contract to fight in London but he refused as he wanted to be remembered as Hal Bagwell of Gloucester. Hal trained in the India House, Barton Street, Gloucester. He fought in venues across the County and



once in the Albert Hall, London. Promoters agree that if he had taken the Contract offered in London he would have been the British Champion. His last 'official' fight was in 1949, when he was knocked out by Moss Mancini. After the fight Moss paid tribute to Hal and said, "Twice I knocked him clean out of the ring. When he stood up the second time, he looked at me and grinned".

Hal retired to be with his family; he married his childhood sweetheart and they had three children, two of whom are still alive. He was the landlord of the Lower George in Westgate Street, Gloucester, where he built a gym upstairs.

Any money I can raise will be used for a statue to Hal Bagwell, THE Gloucester Boxer. No other boxer has such a record.



*In military uniform.*

## Book Review

### **A History of Cheltenham in 100 Objects**

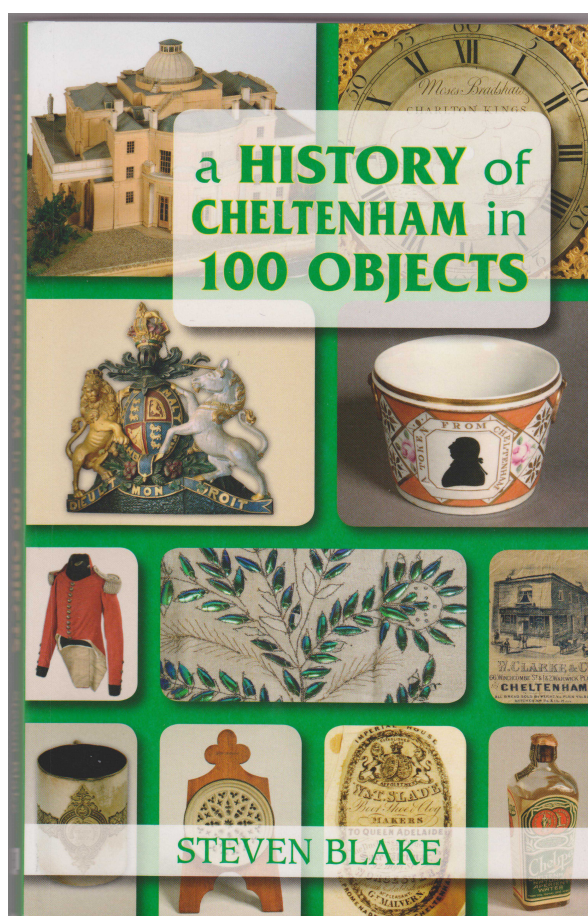
Steven Blake

(The History Press, 2013, £12.99 paperback, ISBN: 9780752461199)

Having read and enjoyed this book, I can assure readers that the author has fulfilled his major aim of demonstrating the value of museum objects in helping us understand our past. I have not visited Cheltenham Museum for many years, but this book made me determined to go there again to check out the incredible variety of artefacts preserved and displayed in the collections.

Steven Blake worked at the Museum for over 30 years, eventually becoming Collections Manager. He has used his wide knowledge of its contents to select a fascinating range of objects to illustrate how Cheltenham has developed over the past three centuries.

What makes the book interesting and different are the many individual stories behind the objects he has selected. For example, Cheltenham physician Dr Edward Wilson's christening mug is used to reveal that the Museum holds one of Britain's most important Antarctic collections, stemming from Dr Wilson's participation in Captain Scott's fateful final expedition.



Much information can be gathered about the town's shops and trades from paper bags and catalogues to metal signs and life-size models such as the Highlander which stood outside Fred Wright's tobacco shop for many years. These objects have found their way to the Museum from donations, purchases and lucky rescues from rubbish tips!

Each of the 100 objects gives a snapshot of the time in which it was created and used. It is obvious that a great deal of research has gone into discovering the names and dates of people who influenced

their creation. Plenty of detail is provided by the author to enable the reader to find out more.

The book's design and reproduction is of high quality and the objects are beautifully presented. A street map of Cheltenham would have been useful for those who are not familiar with all the places mentioned.

As this book is by our GLHA Chairman, one would expect it to be reviewed kindly in this Newsletter! Nevertheless I have no hesitation in genuinely recommending it to all our members as a very good read and an encouragement to visit your local museum soon.

By Vicki Walker

Stonehouse History Group