

**Charity Number: 1165223**

Winter 2021



Sent home from the Front at Christmas 1918

by Colin Kendall Pearson, a Sergeant in the Labour Corps

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## A Great Way to Support the Friends

Would you like to contribute to the Friends financially without it costing you anything? Of course you would! If you shop online, you can do this by using websites which donate to your chosen charity. Here are two examples.

Instead of using Amazon use Amazon Smile. It has the same products at the same prices but when you shop the Amazon Smile Foundation donates 0.5% of the cost of all eligible products to your chosen charity. If you already have an Amazon account it automatically works with Smile.

To sign up, visit **smile.amazon.co.uk**. On your first visit you will be prompted to select the charity you want to receive the donations. Amazon remembers the charity whenever you shop, although you can change it later if you wish. The Friends are already receiving welcome donations as a result of some members' purchases on Smile.

Secondly, you could use **easyfundraising.org.uk**. Go to their website to join. The Friends are already registered with them. Just start your shopping first at easyfundraising, then shop as normal. Retailers will make a small donation to the Friends as a 'thank you' when you purchase from them. There are over 6,000 retailers to choose from including Tesco, M&S, John Lewis, Boots, Expedia and Currys.

Donations are forwarded to the Friends each quarter. During the last quarter one member of the Friends alone raised £47 for the charity through easyfundraising. Do consider using Amazon Smile, easyfundraising, or another similar website. The more income the Friends receive the more they can do to support Gloucestershire Archives.

*Clive Andrews, Chairman*

## **Cataloguing: Gloucestershire Archives' Journey**

Gloucestershire Archives has been somewhat of a pioneer in its approach to computerised finding aids. Gloucestershire Records Office was founded in 1936 and from this early date colleagues ensured that the collections held by the service were thoroughly documented. The various mechanisms for recording details about collections, including tracking new acquisitions, detailed listing of the contents and locating items physically within the repository, was at that time of course entirely paper based. However, by the 1980s new technologies were available which allowed both the service and the profession generally to begin to translate these mechanisms into digital processes.

Gloucestershire Archives worked closely with colleagues within the ICT department of the County Council to design new tools to help manage the collections. The first element to be computerised in the early 1990s was the accessions registers – the old handwritten volumes logging each new acquisition became a DBase database in 1993. This was followed by the creation of the locations database in 1995 which not only enabled us to locate and then find again items from the collections, but also allowed us to log which items had been ordered into the research room and confirm when they had been returned to the shelf. One of the advantages of these systems was the ability to easily pull-out information about both the collections and the work of the service without laborious manual counting of entries in the registers or boxes on shelves.

During this time the archives profession as a whole began to work with external suppliers of computerised systems. Archive services in Hampshire and Suffolk together with DS Ltd created the CALM system which was purchased by Gloucestershire in 1999. Work then began to populate this system with descriptions of the collections – and we decided to start with the broadest

overview. The Handlist of the Contents of the Gloucestershire Record Office was first published in 1968. This publication, made up of descriptions giving an overview of the contents of whole collections, was added to CALM along with all the catalogues relating to the parish collections. This information was made available online in 2001.

Shortly afterwards, Gloucestershire participated in an externally funded programme: Access to Archives (or A2A). In return for contributing our data to the proposed National Archives Network, the A2A programme would convert our paper catalogues to digital data. Teams in individual repositories, including at Gloucestershire, marked up the paper lists which were then sent off for data entry. This electronic data was returned to us and imported into our CALM system, forming the backbone of the digital catalogue. In the 20 years since the A2A project the documentation and management of the collections was, until now, done exclusively through CALM.

Alongside these developments we had independently begun to use technology to improve the access to the collections, again working with colleagues in ICT. One of our first computerised finding aids was the Genealogical database. This resource was built on index data generated by the painstaking work of dedicated volunteers and offers the facility to search by name across a number of heavily used resources. Initially only available as an onsite tool, the data was published online and is still available on our website. Although much of it has been somewhat superseded by more recent developments, particularly the digitisation partnership with Ancestry, it is still regularly used by researchers. A similar tool was created to provide access to names within the tithe apportionments. This is a rich resource for genealogical researchers and is also still available via our website.

Of course, in the technological age we inhabit, over 20 years is an extremely long time to be running a system. Changes in ICT's

strategic direction and new suppliers working in the market meant that when the opportunity arose to rethink, it became clear that we could make some improvements.

We have calculated that the data in the collections management system is worth at least £9 million. It contains data created by the service over 85 years and needs to be kept permanently to enable us to maintain intellectual control of the collections. We also need to be able to provide access to that data so that anyone can find out about our holdings. We want customers to easily find information about the collections, and just as easily ask us questions or make arrangements to come and visit.

Migrating to the new Epexio system has been quite a task. The first thing to do was to make sure that we could import all the data from CALM, which we have successfully done. There are still some wrinkles to be ironed out, especially since CALM and Epexio handle some of our detailed indexing differently, but we've taken the opportunity to try to consolidate as many different points of access as we can. Data from the genealogical database, the tithe apportionments database, indexing work from volunteers and all of our research guides will be incorporated into the system, so it really will be a one-stop shop.

The next area we focused on was the document ordering system. We've worked hard with Metadatis, supplier of Epexio, to design and develop this workflow so that it is as straightforward as possible for users and staff to get to grips with. Changes to some of our procedures required by the pandemic provided us with a timely opportunity to really look in depth at this work flow.

We've undertaken a very low-key launch of the system both for staff and users, and so far, feedback has been encouraging.

The image shows a search interface titled "Search the catalogue". It features a search input field with a magnifying glass icon on the right. Below the input field, there is a dropdown menu labeled "Search over" with "Archive records" selected. Underneath, there are three radio button options: "Match all words" (which is selected), "Match any of the words", and "Words appear together as a phrase". A link below these options says "Or tweak your search further using Search Within or Advanced search". At the bottom of the interface, there are two sections: "Browse collections" with a colorful map of Gloucestershire, and "Research guides" with a wooden signpost pointing to "BOOK NO VILLAGE HALL HATFIELD HOUSE" and "GARROCH SCHOOL".

The entry form for searching the new catalogue system.

We will be developing some training resources about the new online catalogue and there are some exciting areas of development for us coming up. Behind the scenes, our Collections Care team will be working with Metadatis to implement a conservation workflow. This will mean we will be able to link details about conservation processes undertaken on the documents to the metadata about the collections.

We will also be working to implement the new volunteer access facility so that volunteers working on our collections will be able to work directly into Epexio. We're particularly excited about partnering with GFHS to enhance the catalogue descriptions of a series of leases found in the Gloucester Borough collection. Together we'll be piloting the methodology that, thanks to technology, will open up the opportunity for GFHS members around the world to contribute to the project.

We are also excited about future opportunities that will enable all users of the online catalogue to interact with the published descriptions and enhance the data using their own expertise.

By Claire Collins (Collections Development Manager,  
Gloucestershire Archives)

## Community Garden Update

2021 has seen the community garden go from strength to strength. From a wildlife pond being dug out in March, to three beehives in the wild area instead of one, to a multitude of signs around the garden giving people more information about what we've been doing and why, it really is looking amazing now. The Front border purchased by the Friends also looks great, thanks to our key garden volunteer.

This year we applied for, and received, two grants of £1000 from Groundwork UK on behalf of Diageo. These grants went into the Friends restricted garden fund and have been used for several things, as follows:



From the first grant, which was to add to the signage, this lovely, large welcome board has gone over the alley way next to the Dunrossil Centre leading through to the community garden.

There are also two A boards – matching the A board just outside reception – again welcoming people to the garden. One side of one of the boards also includes information about the Friends with a QR code link to the FoGA website.



The second pot of money was used to buy surplus garden equipment mainly for the bees and community activities. The main large purchases from that were a scrapper and juicer that we can use to host fruit pressing days in future (Covid restrictions made us a bit more hesitant to do it this year) and a honey extractor, which we did use to extract and bottle the last 8.5 jars of honey for the year. We'd extracted 28lbs in July, but using borrowed equipment, so it was wonderful to use our own.

Next year we hope to get a few more volunteers in to help with the garden, so if anyone wants to give an hour (or more!) please email me at the address below.

Thanks to FoGA for their continued support of the work we're doing in the garden.

*Ally and Kate*



[ally.mcconnell@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:ally.mcconnell@gloucestershire.gov.uk)



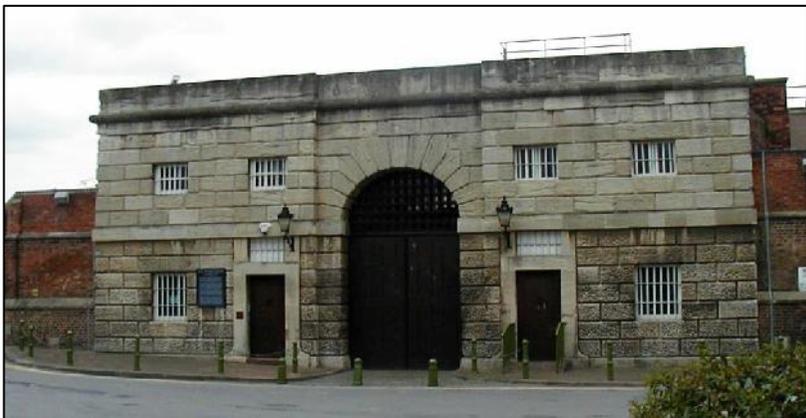
Our honey extractor.

## In the Dock

During a Gloucester Heritage Weekend I took the opportunity to visit the historic Crown Court building. I had wanted to see inside for a long time as it was there in 1843, when it accommodated the Assize Court, that the brother of my 3x Great Grandfather was tried for murder.

In January 1843 he was involved in a vicious fight in Marshfield, the small South Gloucestershire town 12 miles east of Bristol, where my family had lived since the mid-1700s. The man he allegedly killed was 55-year-old Thomas Yeeles who, according to his death certificate, died because of 'a blow upon the face given him by John Andrews'.

A Coroner's inquest was quickly convened in The Crown, then one of the principal inns of the town. The Crown has recently been converted to housing but when it was still a pub there was a plaque in the bar recording the event. John, aged 28, was indicted for murder by the inquest jury and then transported to Gloucester Gaol to await trial.



Gloucester Gaol

He had clearly been badly injured in the fight as a note in the margin of the gaol register (held at Gloucestershire Archives) recorded that he was in the prison hospital all the time. By the time the Assize judges arrived in Gloucester in April 1843 John was sufficiently recovered to appear in court. He was brought before one of the judges on the last day, but I suspect no one had remembered to summon the witnesses.

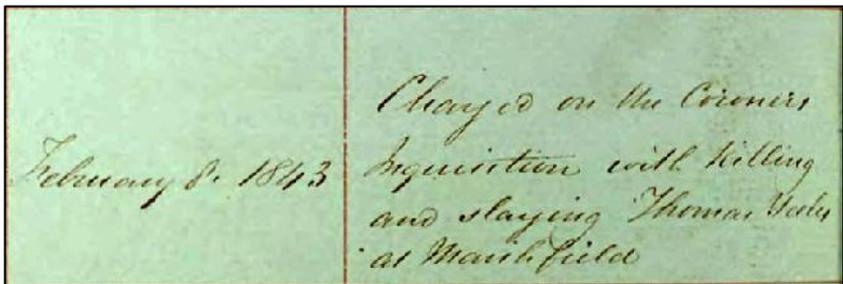


Gloucester Crown Court

According to *The Gloucester Journal*, 'The bill against him had been ignored by the grand jury, and Mr. Skinner, for the prosecution, declined to call any evidence. The prisoner was, therefore, acquitted'.

John had spent two and a half months on remand in the prison hospital. During that time two better known men were also

there. The first was Mr Montague Clark, who was at the centre of a cause célèbre. He had shot and killed his stepfather, the mad and violent Perpetual Curate of Norton, the Revd Hugh Percy Rennett, who was a relative of the Duke of Northumberland. During the fracas Mr Clark had been injured. *The Gloucester Journal* of 15 April 1843 reported that Mr Clark 'did not fire [the pistol] till Mr. Rennett had struck him with a life preserver [a short truncheon]; which latter statement is, in some degree, supported by his head presenting a rather severe wound, and he is now in the gaol hospital, in consequence of the injury'.



John Andrews' Prison Register Entry

Also in the prison hospital with John Andrews was the famous Chartist and secularist George Jacob Holyoak (1817-1906), who was serving a six-month sentence for blasphemy; the last person ever to be convicted of uttering blasphemy in a public lecture. He had delivered the lecture in Cheltenham, and only public protests prevented him from being dragged in chains from Cheltenham to Gloucester, such was the perceived heinousness of his crime.

On his release Holyoak wrote a long letter to the *Cheltenham Free Press* complaining about the 'harsh and cruel' way he had been treated in Gloucester gaol and condemning the surgeon for not insisting on better food and conditions for sick prisoners, even though they were occasionally allowed to exercise in the governor's garden.

After his acquittal John Andrews went back to Marshfield and lived with his widowed mother until she died in 1854. We can only guess at how the Yeeles family reacted when John returned to the town acquitted of murder. Did they ostracise him; did they try to punish him in their own way? While George Holyoak eventually found his resting place in a fine tomb in Highgate Cemetery, John Andrews disappeared from Marshfield after his mother's death and has left no further obvious trace in public records.

I had the privilege of standing in the dock of Court No 1 while I discussed the case with one of Gloucester's resident judges. Today, he said, a charge of murder would never have been brought. As I stood there, I could not help but wonder how John felt when he was on exactly the same spot nearly 180 years ago, facing possible execution. I also wondered if my 3x Great Grandfather had travelled up to Gloucester to be in court and witness his younger brother's trial. There is only so much that documentary evidence can tell us.

*Clive Andrews*



This card and the one on the front cover come from the collection of memorabilia of Colin Kendall Pearson (GA Ref: D5173/2)

## Picturedrome Palmer



*Gloucestershire Archives  
Newspaper cuttings 1909*

In an age where we are bombarded by charity requests in the post, on the radio, TV, in the newspapers and in the street, it's of note to learn about a very early street collector in Gloucester. This rather dapper looking gentlemen is Ernest J. C. Palmer, who was better known in Gloucester as 'Picturedrome Palmer',

because, in 1923, he opened the *Picturedrome Theatre* in Barton Street. Born in Gloucester in 1872, he may have served in the army in South Africa but later he became a grocer with a shop at 21 Lower Barton Street. He later bought and ran *The County Steam Flour & Grist Mill* (sometimes called The Health Mill) which was in Hopewell Street.

He retained a lifelong interest in the welfare of soldiers, sailors and their families and this drove him to become a pioneer of on-street money-raising for charities. On most Sunday mornings he could be seen at the Cross in Gloucester collecting money for various causes.

He also established several worthy concerns in the city. In 1906, he helped set up the Gloucester branch of the Dickens Fellowship (at the time this was only the second branch outside London) which - like the modern Lions Clubs - was very active in offering entertainment to its members and raising money for local good causes. In 1907 he also organised a scheme for helping Gloucester's unemployed, introducing 'halfpenny meals' to feed the hungry, which was probably his greatest social achievement.



*Bounce 1 (G. A. Ref: B162-53719)*

One of the most interesting aspects of his charity work was in 1911, when he raised funds to buy HMS Gloucester a mascot before the ship was to be deployed to the Mediterranean. For this he wore a dog's collar while collecting! The money was raised quickly and before the ship sailed, the Mayor proudly handed over to the captain a bull terrier named Bounce.

Bounce took to life at sea like a duck to water and settled into life on board, earning a reputation for chasing cats, killing poultry and fighting with dogs of different nationalities whenever the ship called into port – which often led to him being detained by local police until the Gloucester's crew paid fines to release him! By late 1916 – after seeing action throughout the war (including at the Battle of Jutland) – Bounce was getting on a bit and so he was given to a retiring HMS Gloucester Petty Officer and Mr Palmer again began fund-raising for a new mascot.



*Bounce II (G. A. Ref: B162-53719)*

In January 1917 a new dog was acquired and put on display at the Public Baths in Gloucester. Bounce II was welcomed on board HMS Gloucester and remained with the ship for the remainder of the war, earning a reputation every bit as bad as his namesake. Four years later, in 1921, when HMS Gloucester was decommissioned, Bounce II went on to serve in HMS Warspite – where within a couple of years he'd cost the crew £20 in release fines!

Sadly, in 1924, Bounce II fell into a dry dock whilst the ship was in the Mediterranean and was killed, ending Gloucester's maritime canine links. For those interested in finding out more about this very interesting man, there is a Collection of press cuttings relating to the work of E.J.C.Palmer (G.A. Ref: 162/53719GS) which can be ordered to view via the usual channels.

*John Putley*

## **The Gloucestershire Wasp**

I recently came across *The Gloucestershire Wasp* when searching through some documents at the Archives (Reference: DY15/10953.15GS). It was published in 1881, the first edition being distributed on 29<sup>th</sup> October that year. As far as I can discover, there were only ever seven weekly editions. It was published by A. Smith and W. J. Lifton at their office at 19 Saint John's Lane in Gloucester. They stated that the journals were of a 'serio-comic nature' but that their columns will not contain offensive or abusive remarks'. Their aim is to 'commence and maintain this journal absolutely free from party bias and offensive personalities'.

The journal contains snippets of information on the local people and events, comment on local and national events, cartoons and plenty of advertisements for local businesses.

# Cadbury's Cocoa.

Cadbury's Cocoa contains three times the strength of the best Homoeopathic Cocoa, which taken in the cup. Beware of Imitations which are often passed by shopkeepers.

**WATCHES! WATCHES!! WATCHES!!!**  
 THE LARGEST ASSORTMENT AT THE LOWEST PRICES IN THE CITY.  
 SILVER FROM 21s., GOLD FROM 42s., AND ENGLISH LEVERS FROM 63s.  
 AGENT FOR AMERICAN WALTHAM WATCHES (PRICE LIST POST FREE).  
 EVERY WATCH WARRANTED FOR TWO YEARS AND EXCHANGED IF NOT APPROVED.

**G. A. BAKER, 93 SOUTHGATE ST**  
 (OPPOSITE THE CORN EXCHANGE) GLOUCESTER.

BOARDS,  
 GLASS-BELLOWS,  
 CUMBERLAND, &c.  
 90 & 91,  
 NORTHGATE  
 STRAITS.

"THE  
 HATTERS,"  
 90 & 91,  
 NORTHGATE ST  
 GLOUCESTER.

**FERRIS BROTHERS**  
 PATENT  
 PRACTICAL  
 SHIRT AND  
 COLLAR  
 MAKERS



**FERRIS BROTHERS**  
 RESPECTFULLY  
 SOLICIT  
 YOUR  
 PAT. O' CAGE.

3,000  
 GOLDEN ANCHOR  
 6YR.  
 GOAT

**E. LEA & Co.,**  
 CABINET MAKERS, UPHOLSTERRERS, CARPET FACTORS,  
 AND FURNISHING CONTRACTORS,  
 29, Northgate, and 29, St. Aldate Street  
 GLOUCESTER.  
 The Largest Stock in the City to Select from of Cocoa Mattings in all widths.

5,000  
 GOLDEN ANCHOR  
 8YR.

In the first edition, one item reads:

The sale of stock at Mr. C. H. Dodson's late residence (Prestbury Park), on the 14<sup>th</sup> instant was well attended. I never remember having seen so much "grub and bub" in so short a period of time. It was a case of:

Ever eating, never cloying, all devouring, all destroying;  
 Never finding full repast, till they eat up all at last.

## Westgate Street Worthies

Whilst researching trades people in Westgate Street, Gloucester, for the council's Westgate Street Heritage Area Project, I came across the following poem. It was originally sent to the Editor of the *Gloucester Mercury* in May 1876. Over 100 years later, the jingle and accompanying comments were sent in for the Spring 1983 edition of Gloucestershire Community Council's Local History Bulletin, by Barbara Drake, the well-known expert on Westgate Street..

Mr Hicks was a builder, a man of renown;  
Davenport, painter, the best in town.  
Montague & Church sold iron, 'tis true  
Firm to their colour! Always 'True blue'.  
Smith made hot cakes with a great deal of care;  
Tollay & Trimmer sold excellent beer.  
Smith, at the "Lower George", a very old friend;  
Marsh, the good cooper, old barrels did mend.  
Power, the printer, did his work well;  
Butt was a chandler, candles did sell.  
Spencer & Rawlings had horses so fine;  
Mr D., at the "King's Head" sold capital wine.  
Kirby made pins, most useful to all;  
Rudhall cast bells, we can all recall.  
Miss Drew sold bread - 'twas said very dear;  
Charles Barrett, he lived at a house called "Old Bear".  
Needham, the bookseller, lived in the street;  
Ward, the good butcher, kept always fine meat.  
Playne was a saddler, useful to all;  
Miss Hatton's toy shop, the "Bat & the Ball".  
Ellis & Hair sold figs so divine;  
Ladkin, perfumer, could make the hair shine.

Dyer, the shoemaker, made his boots neat;  
Protheroe always adorned young men's feet.  
Green, at the china shop, always on call,  
Lived opposite then to the famous "Booth Hall".  
Fream was a chemist, sold lozenges good,  
Cured coughs in an instant, I have quite understood.  
Blackford, the saddle, knew his trade well;  
Spiers sold hats to many a swell.  
Grimes was a draper, good neighbour, and kind,  
No better silks in the town could they find.  
Ellis sold kettles, and very well made;  
Sam Haycock, his young man, took to his trade.  
Another old worthy lived near to the west,  
I must mention Charles Dobbins, I am sure, with the rest.  
Tucker the schoolmaster, whipped his boys well;  
Fisher, the currier, leather did sell.  
Lowe was a jeweller. I can remember  
Losing an ear-ring one dreary December.  
Moore, the confectioner, made jelly so clear;  
Ben Hill, at the "Bull" sold very old beer.  
An oddity he was, and very well known,  
He wished once to be the MP of the town!  
Morris, the grocer, lived near the Shire Hall;  
Old Jemmy Peach was a neighbour to all.  
Davis sold good fish, salmon and plaice,  
At Ryder & Tooby's you could purchase good lace.  
Meadows, the hairdresser, judges lodged there!  
Haviland's "Fleece", was noted for beer.  
Lovett sold drugs that always were good;  
Hazeldine, butcher, meat well understood.  
Jew was a stationer, in good circles did rank;  
Jemmy Wood was his neighbour, and lived at the bank.  
Tom Sanders, he mended and made waistcoats well;  
Old Crook kept a clothes shop and old coats did sell.  
Miss Nest's cakes were rich, and made some people ill;  
But to Fouracre's they'd run and he gave them a pill.  
Good Mowbray Walker lived in the street;

Whalley sold dresses both good and neat.  
Washbournes, undertaker, known to us all -  
Famed for possessing a *real* velvet pall!  
Calton sold umbrellas of quality fine;  
Taylor sold thick rope and very fine twine.  
Mitchel made breeches, cleverly neat;  
Burgess the cork cutter lived in the street.  
Bowden, the cutler, kept knives of all styles;  
There lived in the west, a tailor called Miles.  
John Hughes, the draper, sold shawls very good,  
And lived almost opposite old Jemmy Wood.  
White was a grocer, and Newman was there;  
Ford, the cheesefactor, lived very near.  
Hooper, "The Grasshopper", sugar did sell;  
More of Westgate Worthies I now must not tell.

Barbara Drake wrote: How many of us today are on such familiar terms with the shopkeepers and publicans that we can write a comparable jingle? Or feel that we can keep pace with the constant change, here today, gone tomorrow? It is instructive to compare the variety of trade being offered to what is to be had today, in this once principle shopping area. Using 19th century directories, here is a brief outline of where many of the traders were situated in relation to the scene now.

Davenport, painter: where the Dukeries now stand. Montague and Church: down by the Bridge. Smith, baker: near Lyes, baker: Tolley & Trimmer: between the Folk Museum and the Lower George: Marsh, cooper: near Archdeacon Street: Power, printer: near the old Army Navy store, as was Butt, chandler. Spencer & Rawlings were at the old Booth Hall, and the "King's Head" stood opposite. Kirby, pins: at the Folk Museum: Needham, printer: by King's Head. Playne, saddler: by the Shire Hall. Ellis & Hair were near Power, printer. Ladkin, perfumer, Dyer, shoes, and Protheroe, Green, china, Fream, chemist: all west of College Street, with Blackford, saddler on

the corner. Grimes, draper: by Fream, chemist. Fisher, carrier: the Dukeries. Lowe, jeweller: east of Berkeley Street. The "Bull" was up Bull Lane, and Davis. Fishmonger was on the corner, Ryder & Tooby, draper: the Dukeries. Meadows, hairdresser, Winfields Garden Shop, and Lovett, chemist opposite, with Hazeldean, butcher, nearby. Jew, stationer, and Jemmy Wood's bank were east of Winfields, Sanders, tailor west next to Ladkin, perfumer. Miss Nest's cakes could be bought next to Lovett, chemist so there was no need to run to Fouracre's who were at the Cross next to Mowbray Walker, Editor of the *Gloucester Journal*. Mitchel, tailor: west of College Court. Burgess, cork cutter: by Bull Lane. Miles, tailor: was next to Lovett, chemist. Newman, grocer: east of College Street. Hooper, grocer: "The Grasshopper", became Bellamy & Vickers, later known as Vickers, by Williams and Glyn's bank. It was named "The Grasshopper", because it sold tea, and the story goes back to the days of the tea clippers on the hazardous voyages from the Middle East. A shipwrecked clipper drifted helplessly and then the sound of grasshoppers could clearly be heard on a nearby island as yet unseen, and so the precious cargo was saved.



Another Christmas card from Colin Kendall Pearson

## The 1921 Census

Historians of the family kind are all awaiting the launch of the 1921 census which is due to be unveiled at the start of next year. It will be wonderful to track down those ancestors who are missing from the 1911 census either because they were born after 1911, because the transcription was incorrect or because they disappeared and you could not find them! How refreshing it will be to see the 1921 census and have some `new` records to search. My parents and grandparents should be listed and I am eagerly waiting to see if any more relatives are recorded that I may have missed so far.

If you don't wish to wait until next year for the 1921 census, why not buy the Family History Society's 1931 Electoral Register transcription. This shows the address together with the name of the people resident there if they were eligible to vote (both men and women). Unfortunately, the 1931 census was completely destroyed by fire during World War II so many people use our 1931 voting list as a partial replacement. And the 1941 census was never taken due to the war.

I worked as an enumerator for the 1981 census when I lived in the Midlands. It was lots of fun even though I suffered a dog bite- the people were really very nice. I remember one house in particular where I went to collect the census form. The elderly resident said it was `in the bottom of the bird cage` - did I really want it back? I had a new form with me and we completed it on the doorstep. When I asked him his place of birth, he said a placename in Wales which sounded like `Yssy...` or something similar and I asked him to spell it for me. He said he couldn't as he had forgotten, so I asked the question `Where is it near to?`. He replied `Newtown` and that's the name of the birthplace that I wrote on the form. Remember this when you are searching for your ancestors in the census records. Places of birth are not

always accurate; they could be somewhere nearby; after all, in 2081, will they really be able to find Mr. Jones? (not his real name).

If you have found anything strange or funny when searching the census records for your ancestors, why not share it with our readers. Please send your information to the Editor and we can all enjoy what you have found.

*Sue*, a GFHS volunteer.

The 1921 census will be launched by FindMyPast on their website on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022, 100 years after it was taken. Because of the absence of the 1931 and 1941 censuses, this census records an important point in history. It contains more than 38 million people and was the first census to recognise divorce and people's employment details.

On the FindMyPast website in January 2022, there will be indexes, transcripts and more than 18 million images of the original pages. The indexes will be free to access but the transcripts will cost £2.50 each to see and to view the image of the original record, to ensure the transcription is accurate, it will cost you £3.50 each. Should you already pay for the Pro subscription to FindMyPast, you can get a 10% discount on each purchase.

It will be possible to view the original images for free but you would have to travel, either to the National Archives at Kew, to Manchester Central Library or to the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth to do so.

If past experience is anything to go by, it may well be worth being patient and waiting a few days after the 6<sup>th</sup> January to access the census. Often when the census is launched, so many people try to access it and the website crashes! Be warned!

*Liz*

## The Glo'stershire 'Squire: or A Christmas Gambol.

A Comedy.

As it was acted at a gentleman's seat near that city.

This short play was written by Richard Gwinnett, described in the preface as a gentleman, deceased, "who was justly allowed by all, that had the happiness of knowing Him, to be a Person of an uncommon Genius, and possessed of every Quality which can render one Man agreeable (sic) to another".

Richard Gwinnett, (1675-1717) was a poet and dramatist who spent his short life moving between his father's home Shurdington and Lincoln's Inn in London. It is not known exactly when he wrote this play, which was published in 1732, but it was performed locally before his death in 1717.

The play had a cast of thirteen, aptly-named characters played by Richard's friends and neighbours, at his home in Shurdington. They were:

**Old *Christmas*.** A fat, unwieldy, red fac'd Country 'Squire. His coat stuck with cards, a most Voluptuary, who talks of nothing but Eating, Drinking and Gaming. Played by Morg. Jones.

**Mimick.** A brisk, prating, impertinent Fellow, who runs into all Companies, ridicules their Words and Actions, and vexes them by his Apeish Tricks. Played by Rob. Tutter.

**Pinch-Gut.** A most avaricious old Miser, who grudges himself the common Necessities of Life, but will gormandize at another's Table of free Cost, a great Exclaimer against keeping up the Hospitality of Christmas, a mighty Pretender to Sobriety, merely to spare his own Purse. Played by F Githens.

**Scrape.** An old Fidler (sic). Played by Tho. Clement.

**Ballance.** A very sober Man, Steward to ‘Squire Christmas, who by his Prudence interposes up on all Occasions, and keeps the Madness of the Company in tolerable Bounds. Played by Richard Gwinnett himself.

**Squirrel.** Boy to the Steward. [Nobody was named to play this part].

**Scabbard.** An old Soldier. quarrelsome, testy, and for fighting everybody. Played by T. Singleton.

**Sauce-Box.** Cook to ‘Squire Christmas, peevish and passionate. Played by T. Atkins.

**Spiggot.** Butler to ‘Squire Christmas, a sober, genteel young Fellow, faithful in his business, but tired of his Service from the Looseness and Intemperance he sees. Played by R. Thornton.

**Rag.** A sturdy, impudent Beggar. Played by P. Sutton.

**Club.** Porter to ‘Squire Christmas. Played by Jer. Horton.

**Flyblow.** A parasite, and a constant Guest, who pays for his Entertainment by his egregious Flattery of old ‘Squire Christmas. Played by Jo. Rogers.

**Mrs. Gillflirt.** House-Keeper to ‘Squire Christmas. [Again, nobody was named for this part.

The actors’ surnames of Jones, Tutter, Githens, Singleton, Thornton, Sutton, Horton, Rogers and Atkins can all be found in Gloucestershire in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and there was even a Thomas Clement in Shurdington around the same time.

The Prologue, read by Spiggot, the butler, states:

‘Tis said that Christmas comes but once a year,  
And when it comes, it always brings Good Cheer;  
I wish your Stomachs may be Good, since We  
Shall here present you with Variety.  
Old Christmas, now, invites ye All to feast,  
And I bid welcome thus to every Guest.  
Welcome to Christmas therefore now ye be,  
And many a joyful Christmas may ye see.  
Besides, that We may give ye more Content,  
Christmas, in Masquerade, We represent.  
We can’t tell how ‘twill please, but this We’ll say,  
You are all kindly welcome to our Play.

The story takes place in and around the neighbourhood of Squire Christmas’s home. Rag the beggar and Scrape the fiddler team up to provide the musical entertainment for the Squire and his visitors. They manage to persuade Pinch-Gut that he would have a much better life joining them on the road whilst, at the same time, they plan to divest him of the money he hoards.

Meanwhile, as the Squire is taking his afternoon nap, his visitors endeavour to amuse themselves, with Mimick and Flyblow taunting and ridiculing Scabbard, the old soldier, until he lashes out, injuring one of his fellow guests, fortunately not too seriously. As Scabbard is removed by the authorities, ‘Squire Christmas, woken by the disturbance, suggests to Mimick, rather late, that “your Tongue may chance, sometime, or other, to be too quick for your Heels, and you may come lame home.”.

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*Wishing you all a  
Merry Christmas*