

Spring/Summer 2017

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**Welcome** to the PLHS Summer newsletter 2017.

Our schedule of talks & presentations begins again in September.

Since the last newsletter we have seen the release of Prestbury Past & Present Volume 2 by our very own Norman Baker. This has proved to be a popular addition to our 'Prestbury Past & Present' series and we hope those of you who have purchased a copy are enjoying learning more about our village. If you don't own a copy yet, you can buy one at our monthly meetings or from Prestbury Post Office and Prestbury Library.

We've had a number of interesting and well researched presentations. We hope to eventually translate the content of these presentations into a written record for future reference, possibly in the form of a journal or as longer articles in the newsletter.

Our volunteers are working on a number of indexing projects and we continue to add items of local interest to our archive. Members are welcome to view our archive which is held at Prestbury Library, please contact us to arrange a time.

Plans were announced at the last meeting to look into the possibility of creating history information boards to be placed at key locations around the village. Initial discussions are under way with the Prestbury Parish Council to identify suitable locations and the committee is researching funding options.



# Dates for your diary



## Village History Walk

26<sup>th</sup> June NEW route, booking essential

Our popular History Walk will follow a new route this year taking in the Noverton area of Prestbury. For those of you who have booked a place please make sure you wear suitable footwear. There are two stiles on the planned route. Contact: [prestburyhistory@gmail.com](mailto:prestburyhistory@gmail.com)



7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> September

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

Roger will be running his popular History Walk on the 8<sup>th</sup> September. Times to be confirmed. Please check the website for updates.

## Social Evening

25<sup>th</sup> September 7:30pm at the WI Hall



How well do you know your village? We will be holding our annual social meeting at the WI Hall. This year there will be displays of materials from our archive, a village history quiz, slideshow of historic images and complementary refreshments. Come along and chat to your committee, meet fellow PLHS members and find out about our latest research projects and events. **FREE ENTRY**

# Prestbury School

23<sup>rd</sup> October 7:30pm at the WI Hall

Following the unearthing of a box of school records, Rebecca Sillence has been uncovering new details about the development of our local school. She will be presenting a brief history of St Mary's School, illustrated with maps, photos and excerpts from the school minute books.

[We would love you to get involved](#) so there will be an opportunity after the presentation for you to share memories and photographs of your schooldays at St Mary's and reminisce over a cup of tea.

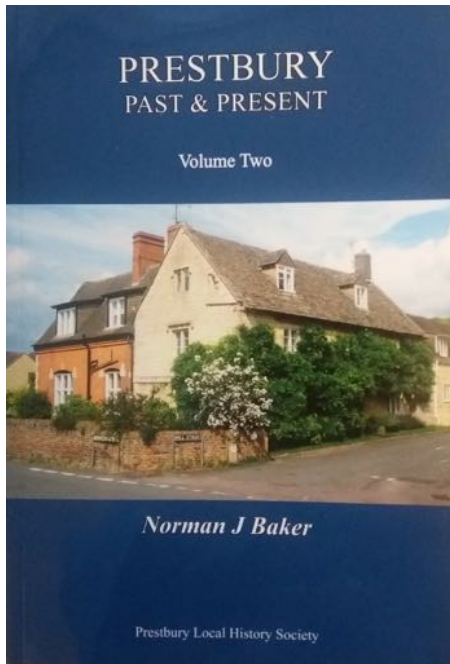


## The 1762 Map of Prestbury

27<sup>th</sup> November 7:30pm at the WI Hall

Michelle Rees will be talking us through the earliest available map of Prestbury and explaining what we can learn from it. Tucked away in the Gloucestershire Archives in an un-indexed box of the De la Bere papers we discovered a previously unknown map which appears to date from 1762. This is the earliest map of Prestbury we have found to date and gives us a tantalising glimpse of what the parish looked like in the decades following inclosure (in 1732). The hand drawn, coloured map contains a code that appears to indicate local landowners. Michelle has been undertaking research to unlock its secrets.

# NEW BOOK PUBLISHED



**£10.00**

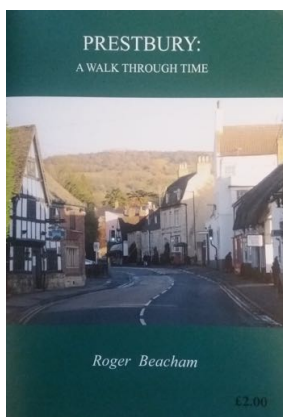
*We are thrilled to announce the publication of Volume 2 in our Prestbury Past & Present series!*

This volume has been carefully researched and written by our former secretary Norman Baker. The 122 page book covers subjects like the Lower Mill, Home Farm and the early development of Prestbury, such as the open field system. It is a well-referenced and informative read but is also clear to follow and includes illustrations, photographs and maps.

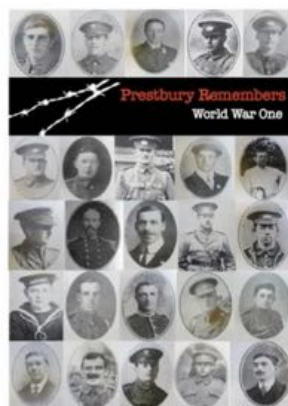
## Other Publications

PLHS Publications can be purchased at our meetings. To order publications by post (additional P&P costs apply) please contact:

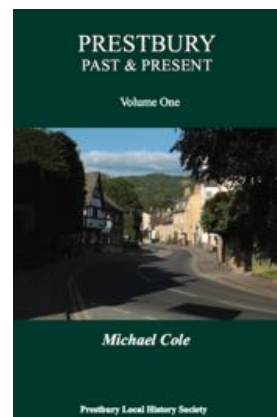
[prestburyhistory@gmail.com](mailto:prestburyhistory@gmail.com)



**£2.00**



Free



**£10.00**

# Prestbury Street Names

I was recently at Cheltenham Local History Library working on a new project with David Jones. We are scanning any entries mentioning Prestbury in the Cheltenham trade directories and need to make a possible list of street and residential building names that might be mentioned in the directories. One of the sources we were using was the Cheltenham Gazeetter which is available online. In particular, two street names raised both of our eyebrows! I have transcribed and discussed them below: [www.bgas.org.uk/publications/cheltgazsearch.html](http://www.bgas.org.uk/publications/cheltgazsearch.html)

## IRONMONGERS

*'Ironmongers, Prestbury. Recorded as a placename in early 17<sup>th</sup> century (Victoria County History, p. 77); location uncertain. Perhaps derived from a surname.'*

The Victoria County History (VCH) references the above place name as occurring in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in a paragraph discussing occupations in Prestbury. In particular, the occupations of smith and carpenter. It is easy to make the assumption that it may have been located in Blacksmiths Lane and the VCH state that the smithy which gave its name to Blacksmith Lane was in use in 1903. Other forges are mentioned from c. 1290 but no specific location is given.

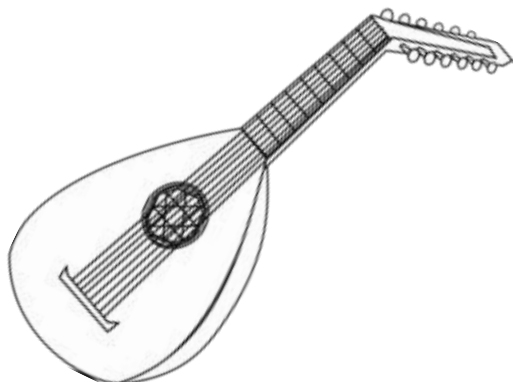
## SCOP STREET

*'Scop Street, Prestbury. Noted 1398; unlocated but possibly indicating shops and therefore perhaps near the Burgage (Victoria County History, p. 77)'*

A general search for a definition of scop found it to be a noun of old English origin describing a bard or minstrel. It is related to the word

skop in Old Norse. Chambers (2010) discusses the role of a scop as someone who committed poems to memory in particular in relation to Beowulf. Orally preserved history can change over time as it is passed between individuals.

The reference in the Victoria County History for Prestbury gives no further insight apart from as stated in the above entry but in the same sentence mentions a house in the Burgage called Bakehouse. That leads to the question of where Scop Street could have been in Prestbury. The entry above states that it may have indicated shops and the other definition is of a bard or minstrel. Could this be 'shops' for a bard or minstrel where Prestbury folk came to pass on stories, listen to music, eat and drink located by a house called Bakehouse?? Any ideas or comments welcome!!



Reference: Chambers, R.W. (2010) Beowulf An Introduction to the Study of the Poem with a Discussion of the Stories of Offa and Finn. *The Project Gutenberg* [online] [Accessed 2 June 2017]

*Michelle Rees*

## Donations for our Archive

We welcome all items of local interest: Photographs, letters, diaries, postcards, illustrations, newspaper cuttings, documents or anything else relating to life in the village including local buildings, people & businesses. Please bring along your items to one of our meetings or contact us via email at: [prestburyhistory@gmail.com](mailto:prestburyhistory@gmail.com)

# Prestbury Miscellany

*Below we have compiled some interesting village connections and trivia for you. Test your knowledge of Prestbury's history at our village history quiz and social on September 25<sup>th</sup>!*



*John Draper of Lower Hill Farm who won the 1955 European Moto-Cross Championship.*

On [March 9<sup>th</sup> 1963](#) the BBC cameras came to Lower Hill Farm, Prestbury to televise a round of the popular Grandstand motorcycle scrambles series. Hosted by Harold Draper and the Cheltenham Home Guard MCC it was run in very muddy conditions. Murray Walker said that he found it was extremely difficult to identify muddy riders. He guessed that his view would be acceptable because if he could not recognise the riders neither could the viewers. It was reported that one of the cameramen got an electric shock as the rain entered his equipment.

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In our own Prestbury Manor Rolls I came across the name Goderich when looking at the [1386 Manor Court Roll](#). Alice Goderich was fined 2d for non-attendance and also ordered to appear at the next court to answer the Lord for failing to pay pannage for her pigs! It seems very likely that it is the same family who stayed in the village for the next few centuries and gave us the Ann Goodrich alms-houses but I doubt if we will ever know for sure.



*The Anne Goodrich Alms Houses formerly stood in the High Street.*



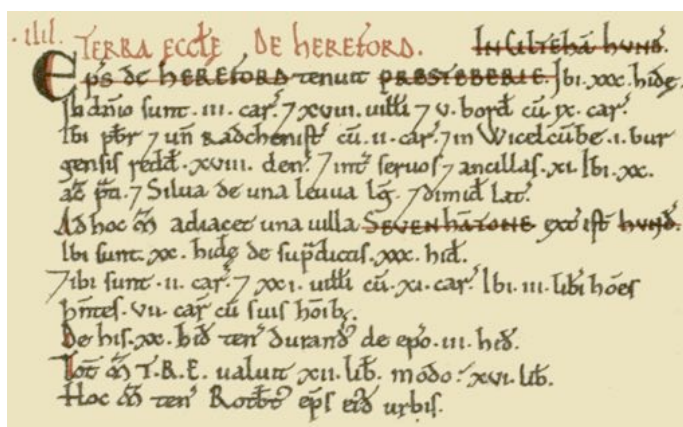
I stumbled across an interesting entry in the book 'A Botanical Guide to the Environs of Cheltenham' by James Buckman in 1844. In it he describes the likely habitats and locations of the various flora. One entry caught my eye, which was a listing for Goosefoot. He describes as being found under a wall near the Grotto, Prestbury. Goosefoot is otherwise known as Good King Henry, Fat Hen (it was used to fatten up chickens) Poor Man's Asparagus or Lincolnshire Spinach. It was originally cultivated as a 'pot herb' and was commonly found near villages where it had escaped into the wild.

*Chenopodium.*      *Goose Foot.*  
*Bonus Henricus.*      *Good King Henry.*

6. Under a wall near the Grotto, Prestbury. Occasionally near Rick yards. Sevenhampton Church yard.

In [1086](#) the Domesday survey describes Prestbury as having:

39 villagers, 5 smallholders, 6 slaves, 5 female slaves, 3 freemen, 1 priest, 3 riding men, 1 burgess 5 Lord's plough teams and 29 men's plough teams.



According to Atkyns about [1712](#) the population of Prestbury was 445 with 100 houses and 40 Freeholders.

According to the [2011](#) census Prestbury parish had a population of 6,981.



# INDEXING PROJECTS

We are always looking for new people to join our indexing team so please get in touch if you think this would be of interest to you.

## Manor Court Rolls

Norman has written about the Prestbury Manor Court Rolls in earlier Newsletters and spoke to us about them at our meeting in April. The Rolls are a great resource for the history of our parish and help is needed in making that history accessible.

The study of the Rolls has already led to the creation of a database of people pre-1841. The census returns provide lists of people from 1841 as does the Tithe Apportionments. A list of people pre-1841 would therefore be useful as a resource for local history research and for family historians. There are many names listed over several centuries in the Court Rolls as well as in other older documents. The History Society is therefore creating a database of such references. (Another obvious source of such information is the Parish Registers – would some-one like to have a go at creating a database of the entries? We can set up the database and supply a straightforward questionnaire into which the names and details can be inserted. It is essentially a copying exercise.) The Court Rolls are in two sections – the pre 1726 Latin Rolls and the post 1726 English Book. I have photocopies of all the 220 pages of the book and need help transcribing them into typed A4 pages. The book is handwritten but the transcribing is largely reading and typing. There are occasional abbreviations and unusual names/words as well as the usual issues of reading handwriting but it is essentially a copying exercise. Would anyone (or two working together) like to join the very small team currently working on this? It is work to be done at home at convenient times.

The older Court Rolls are a very different challenge. They are in handwritten Latin. The Cheltenham Rolls were tackled by a small team of people, one of whom had schoolboy Latin, and over time the whole

collection was translated and published. Is there a small team who would like to rise to the challenge? Or are there people who would like to help with such work? There are over 100 Prestbury Rolls at Gloucester Archives and they would need photographing to get readable images.

**ELIZABETHAN SECRETARY HAND.** From time to time we find ourselves faced with old hand-written English language documents. Reading them requires some skill but it can be learned. There are online courses and books available to help. It would be a great resource for us to have some-one who is able to transcribe such documents. Do we have one already? Would some-one like to develop this skill?

## Tithe Apportionments

The Tithe Apportionments and Map were created in 1841 and give us a map of the parish with every property numbered on the map and a list of the land owners and tenants. It is therefore a very valuable document for research. The documents exist because it was decided that collecting tithes in kind needed changing to a cash only payment. That required a list and a map to ensure that all properties were included. These Tithe documents have been available only at Gloucester Archives but the list of landowners and tenants has now been reproduced as a database which can be searched by property number, owners or tenants. The digitised list will shortly be available in our own Archive along with the copy of the map.

## Street Directories

We now have a team of volunteers working their way through the street and trade directories held at Cheltenham Local & Family History Library. They will be scanning the pages relevant to Prestbury and the images will be made available via our website. Further work will then be undertaken to create a searchable index.

# The Grotto

*“At the back of the road, on the left, is a curious tea-drinking place called The Grotto where diner parties also are accommodated. The ground it occupies is small and confined; for the temples etc erected upon it, might, with considerable ingenuity, and more room to work in, have filled up and embellished a considerable space. At the top of the garden, on a raised terrace is a Chinese temple, surrounded by a covered balcony. On the one hand is a circular rustic building, fancifully decorated with shells and fossils, and stones, from the neighbouring hills; on the other a stone tower, from the top of which is a pretty prospect of the neighbourhood. The buildings were erected, and the gardens laid out, by the former proprietor who is said to have shortened his life by the fatigue it occasioned. The gardens abound with shrubs and flowers, and the whole, aided by the attention of Mr Rooke, the present proprietor, will afford a placid evening’s entertainment.”*

## Ruffs Beauties of Cheltenham 1806

John Darke married Sarah Walter at St Marys Prestbury in 1767 and built The Grotto in 1781 only to die shortly after in 1783. In 1788 King George III visited the Tea rooms; Thomas Rooke was the proprietor at that time.



Above: examples of what the follies may have looked like.

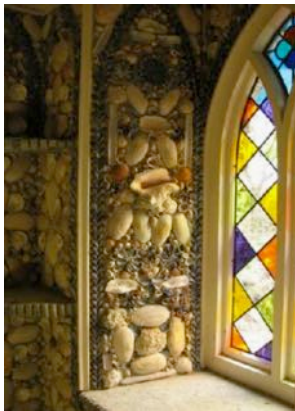
Left: With no public access on private land only a pillar which has a conservation order on it remains behind the abandoned doorway.



*Tony Noel*

# A visit to the Grotto

Being naturally curious, speculation about what one lay behind the ivy-smothered gate in Mill Street has always captured my imagination. I've often been reminded of the Secret Garden, as I'm sure many other Prestbury residents have before me. Whilst no images exist, we have been left some tantalising descriptions of the once famous tea-garden.



*“The young people rested at the Gardens, where they took tea, and were much delighted with a grotto, which is decorated with shells, fossils, and petrifications, the windows of which are enriched with painted glass, and the pavement of the floor is tessellated”*

Excerpt from ‘Cheltenham and its vicinity, described in a series of letters, by a convalescent’ published in 1855.

“But the chief object of curiosity here is a tea-garden, called THE GROTTTO, Which is greatly superior to what might be expected in such a sequestered spot. Its accompaniments are in the prettiest style; but the buildings erected upon it would have been sufficiently large to have embellished a more considerable space. The Grotto is decorated with shells and fossils, which are very tastefully arranged; the windows are in the Gothic style, and ornamented with painted glass; the floor is tessellated; and the walls are adorned with convex mirrors. At the top of the garden is a Chinese temple, erected on a raised terrace, and surrounded by a covered balcony, which is generally used as a tea-room. On the right is a stone tower with two good octagonal rooms, from the top of which is a prospect of the whole village. The gardens were laid out with much taste by the late Mr. Darke, and are planted with a profusion of flowers and shrubs.”

From ‘An Improved Cheltenham Guide’ published in 1815

*“I have attempted nothing like pleasure since I came here, once excepted, which was to drink tea in Prestbury, a village about two miles distant, whither I went on a double horse. Our party drank tea in a little garden they call the Grotto...”*

From ‘Edward Jenner the Cheltenham Years’ by John B. Blake

*"I do not love reasoning  
with women— and was  
glad to escape to my horse.  
Press bury grotto is a  
romantic object, and  
Ulett is pretty."*

Royal Recollections on a  
Tour to Cheltenham 1788  
- King George III

Perhaps the most noteworthy visitor  
was King George III who wrote about his  
visit in 1788.

We know from diaries, advertisements  
and letters that there were various kinds  
of entertainment, dinner parties and  
gatherings over the years. An example  
of one such event is illustrated below.

MR. FARRELL, PERFORMER ON THE UNION PIPES,

Begs Leave Respectfully to Inform the Nobility and Gentry  
Resorting to Cheltenham, that on

MONDAY, JULY 28, 1800

There Will be a Public Breakfast, at Half Past Eleven, for His Benefit AT  
THE GROTTTO, PRESTBURY, when He Will Play Several Favorite  
Scotch and Irish Airs, and Pieces of Music, with that Favorite Rondow, in  
Oscar, and Malvina, and Magie Lawder, with New Variations. After the  
Performance, There Will be an Irish Jig, Danced by Two Natives.

**GROTTTO AND PLEASURE GARDENS,  
PRESTBURY, NEAR CHELTENHAM.**

**E**lizabeth HAINES, Widow, respect-  
fully begs leave to acquaint the Nobility, Gentry,  
and Public in general, that she has recently entered upon  
the above Premises; and having laid in a Choice and Select  
STOCK of WINES and SPIRITS, humbly solicits their  
Patronage and Support, assuring them, that no care and  
attention shall be wanting to render her House equal in  
point of Accommodation, to any in the neighbourhood.  
Well aired Beds are prepared, and Dinners dressed for  
Parties at the shortest Notice.

An advertisement in the 1809 Cheltenham Chronicle

If you are interested in  
finding out more about the  
Grotto, Roger Beacham has  
written in some detail about  
the subject. I would  
recommend reading his  
work (available from  
Cheltenham Library &  
Gloucestershire Archives)  
for a more comprehensive  
history. We will try to obtain  
a copy for our archives.

*Rebecca Sillence*

# ไกล่ไกล่'ร ๕๐๖รพ๐๒๑ หนี๐๖ลพลญ

During my research into Bouncer's Lane I came across an interesting piece of village 'folklore' that many local researchers have stumbled on before me... This article called Gandhi's Cotswold Hideaway was printed in the Gloucestershire Echo in 1982 when the film Gandhi was released.

The tiny man of peace spent several days in the village of Prestbury far away from the public eye. He made a private visit to the home of the three Slade sisters in Bouncers Lane. Among the people who met him was Barry Fisher, now a Cheltenham borough councillor. "I was a only a small boy then, but distinctly remember this tiny man dressed in a white robe" he said. Mr Fisher lived in Prestbury and often saw The Mahatma walking with the three spinsters, all of whom are now dead.

"I spoke to him several times and can remember thinking how religious he seemed" He explained that the sisters, who lived in a house called Ortler, had been missionaries in India and had forged close ties with Gandhi. "I can remember my mother telling me how important he was, but it did not really register because I was so young" Said Mr Fisher "But the memory has always been with me, and I will never be able to forget him"

His story was confirmed by a market gardener in the St Mark's area of Cheltenham. Mr George Cluer said "I can corroborate Councillor Fisher's story because I used to have an orchard and field opposite Bouncer's Lane and regularly saw Gandhi myself." – *Gloucestershire Echo 1982*

Norman Baker pointed out to me that the visit allegedly took place in 1946. Although I think we'd all love it to be true in reality it is it is unlikely that the real Gandhi visited our village at that time. There is no trace of a visit by him to England to coincide with this date and it seems very unlikely as India was in turmoil and the struggle for independence (which was achieved in 1947) was intense. Gandhi himself was assassinated in 1948.

[https://wikilivres.ca/wiki/Chronology\\_of\\_Mahatma\\_Gandhi%27s\\_life/India\\_1946](https://wikilivres.ca/wiki/Chronology_of_Mahatma_Gandhi%27s_life/India_1946)

So was another visiting Indian missionary (who may even have had the same name) mistaken for Gandhi?

*Rebecca Sillence & Norman Baker*

We hope you all enjoy the summer and look forward to welcoming you back in September.

## Social Evening

25<sup>th</sup> September 7:30pm at the WI Hall



Complementary refreshments (wine, tea and coffee) and nibbles will be provided.

We hope you will all enjoy a relaxed and entertaining evening. Test how well you know Prestbury with our fun village history quiz.

Everyone is welcome, FREE entry.