

## Welcome to the PLHS Spring newsletter 2016.

This year's programme has started well with good attendance at our first two presentations and recent AGM. Due to Easter Monday there will be two presentations in April this year rather than our usual slot at the end of March. There has also been a small change to the running order of our advertised programme of events (see below). We have an exciting new route planned for this year's History Walk in June and the society will also be taking part in the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations on 11<sup>th</sup> June.

*We are pleased to announce a new PLHS publication which is currently at the printers and can be preordered at our next meeting, read on to find out more...*

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

Web: [prestburyhistory.com](http://prestburyhistory.com)

### Forthcoming Events...

- April 4th** Lost & Forgotten: Prestbury's demolished buildings - *Michael Cole*
- April 25th** Our Thatched Heritage - *David Jones*
- May 23rd** The History of St Mary's Church - *Lynda Hodges*
- June 27th** Village History Walk NEW!



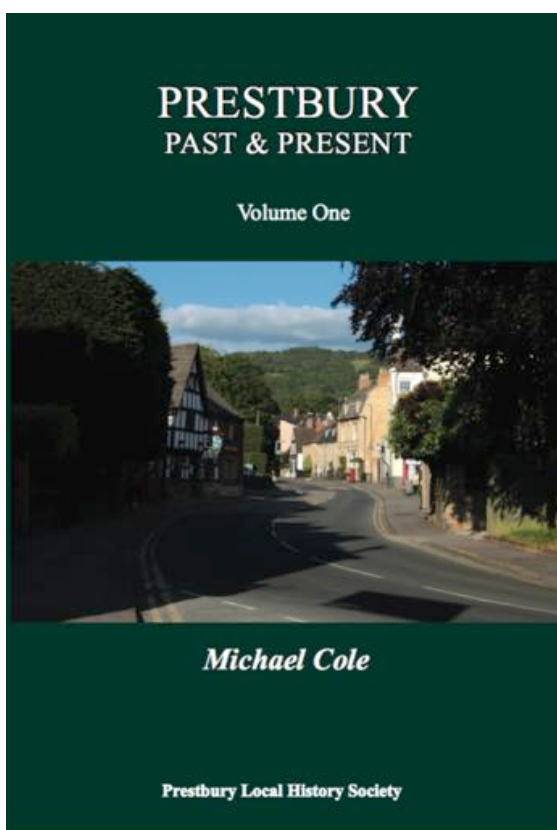
# NEW PUBLICATION!

## Prestbury: Past & Present Vol.1

*We are excited to be introducing our new publication, which is the beginning of a series of volumes. We are very pleased to have Michael Cole as author of the first in the series, with his depth of knowledge in Prestbury local history and his experience in writing articles and books in the United Kingdom and overseas.*

**There will be an opportunity to pre-order this publication on the 4th April.**

Everyone can see that Prestbury has a long history, and an attractive legacy of old buildings. But there is, as yet, no published history giving any deep insights into this heritage. Prestbury Past & Present is an attempt to remedy this – relating the legacy of past centuries to the village as it exists at the beginning of the twenty-first century.



*In this first volume Michael Cole has used a diversity of approaches to open up several neglected areas. Published by Prestbury Local History Society, of which the author was co-founder and chairman, this is intended to be the first of many such publications which, taken together, will make a substantial body of research and reference for today's residents and for future generations.*

The current volume has four main sections: an introduction describing the parish in general terms; a detailed look at 'Lost Buildings' and their forgotten heritage; a statistical analysis of Victorian Prestbury, under the title

'Masters, Servants & Tradesmen; and a review of numerous prehistoric finds within the parish. It has 150 pages and 33 illustrations. Cover price £10.

# Would you like to know more about researching the history of Prestbury?

PLHS Research Meeting  
Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2pm at Prestbury Library



If you are interested in history and in your local environment, then you would be very welcome at a meeting to be held at Prestbury Library on Monday 18th April at 2pm, arranged by Prestbury Local History Society.

The meeting is for any one who is, or who would like to be, engaged in local history research. It is intended that the meetings will continue at regular intervals. Previous experience or qualification is not a requirement.

The format of the meeting will be to give an opportunity for any attending to say what they are, or would like to be, exploring; to offer suggestions for subjects for research; to explore the process of research and to have a look at some of the resources available.

If you would like to attend then please just turn up. If you have any queries please contact Norman Baker who will be running the meeting.

Email: [njb123@talktalk.net](mailto:njb123@talktalk.net) Phone: 01242 583187

*Norman Baker*



# Springtime in Prestbury

*What will we remember about Prestbury in the future? As well as historical resources we are also keen on preserving a record of 'current day' Prestbury.*



Daffodils in Tatchley Lane



Crocus in St Mary's Churchyard



Bluebells in Queens Wood



Spring Lambs near the Hayes



2016 Cheltenham Gold Cup race at Prestbury Park

*Rebecca Sillence*

# Prestbury's Thatched Heritage

*As we all know, or think we all know, thatched roof houses were what most of our ancestors lived under from the very earliest times and evidence for this still exists in many parts of the rural landscape of Britain...or does it?*

What we see now we often take for traditional building in that area, but is that correct...did they always build houses with roofs like this...in these materials..?

Recorded history shows that roofs thatched in local materials existed in most areas of Britain and Ireland from the very earliest times through the Roman period and into medieval times.



The houses using thatch tended to be simple uncomplicated structures. The earliest being round houses with low, wattle and daub walls, just one large living space in which people lived, cooked, slept and worked.

Later, in post-Roman times buildings would become square, or oblong, with cruck, or 'A' frame timber gables at each end.

Again, often they would be no more than one long room open to the rafters, or they might be partitioned for privacy or warmth with a screen wall beyond the height of a man, but otherwise still open to the roof.

These simple long, thatched roofed houses were common in Britain for centuries, especially from Saxon times, thatched buildings covered the landscape from the smallest hovels to the grandest halls and sometimes even churches were thatched.

Sadly, much of Prestbury's thatch has disappeared, but some notable thatched houses still survive while others have sprouted where none existed before...!

*To learn more about Prestbury's thatched heritage come to the talk to be given by PLHS archivist, David Jones on **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April**.*



*David Jones*

# News from your Committee

The following members were re-elected to the PLHS Committee at our recent AGM.

*Tony Noel (Chairman)*

*Peter Annesley (Treasurer)*

*Norman Baker (Research meeting coordinator)*

*Rebecca Sillence (Webmaster & Newsletter Editor)*

*Michelle Rees (Secretary)*

*David Jones (Archivist)*

*Val Porter (Venue booking)*

## Display Boards

We are currently in the process of buying a tabletop display board so we can show materials from our archives at our meetings. It will also enable us to develop a presence at local history days and to have occasional displays in the library foyer.



## Slide Changer

Tony has agreed to lend PLHS a working remote slide changer and pointer, which should help to make our presentations more professional and user friendly for the speaker and audience.



## PLHS Archive

We will be adding a catalogue of our archive to the website and digitizing as much of it as possible to make it fully accessible. The archive is held at Prestbury library but you currently need a key holder to be present. Please contact [prestburyhistory@gmail.com](mailto:prestburyhistory@gmail.com) if you'd like access to our archive.

## Queen's Birthday Celebrations

PLHS will have a presence at the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations planned for June 11<sup>th</sup> from 12-7pm. We are hoping to have a stall and an archive display at the Library. Val and David have been attending the event planning meetings.

## Website & Research Guide

I am continuing to develop the PLHS website [prestburyhistory.com](http://prestburyhistory.com) and am hoping to add some resources for local researchers. We are looking into the possibility of adding digital images of archive material and including indexes and guides to resources relating to Prestbury.

*Rebecca Sillence*



# Street and field names of Prestbury

*I have added field names to the title of my article this time as I wanted to mention two fields that may be added to the existing cemetery. As a dog walker, I frequently cross these fields and enjoy the view towards the hills.*

They are on the 1838 tithe map and listed as owned by Rev. John Edwards (later to become Baghot-Delabere). Both were tenanted by an Issac Witts who farmed other fields that continued towards Ryefield (or closer to Sainsburys!)

Both fields show evidence of the old furrows created by farmers as they toiled their plots of land.



## Smith's Furlong

This is the field known in 1838 as Smith's Furlong. Originally it had a long thin piece of land extending from the field joining the walking path which extends around the estate.



## Sparnall's Orchard

This is the field known in 1838 as Sparnall's orchard and it would be interesting to know the origin of 'Sparnall'.

*However, while it is still possible have a walk along these fields (with or without a dog!), look at the furrows and enjoy the views.*

*Michelle Rees*

# Prestbury's Post Boxes

*The first main land British Post Boxes were installed in 1853 and Cheltenham followed with the first in the town in 1854. Some very early Penfold boxes still exist in the town. Before this time letters were taken to a receiving house or in the cities a Bellman walked the streets collecting mail.*

Most Prestbury Post boxes are much later. The oldest I believe is the box on the end of Coronation Road. The name of the road dates from the coronation of Edward VII in 1902, after he had succeeded Queen Victoria in 1901.

The next reference I have found to a Post Box in Prestbury is to a new Wall letter box in Shaw Green Lane in 1914. Unfortunately the existing wall box is a newer addition but the site may well be the same.

At my recent talk a gentleman told me that some early Post Boxes had been made in Gloucester with a unique feature, a vertical post slot. This seems to have been a Victorian idea which was not successful.

*Prestbury has a full range of modern Post Boxes as I found when I decided to check on their ages. Free standing, wall mounted and some mounted on stands or telegraph poles.*



Until the Post office was established in the Prestbury High Street it is likely that stamps could only be obtained from the Cheltenham Post Office. This moved to several sites around the town before settling in 1876 in the Promenade where it remained for many years until moving to Smith's in the High Street. It seems that the initial Penny Black stamp was not adhesive and a "sticky" version was a later development. The Royal Mail History says that this was in 1840.

Looking at a number of Directories kindly provided by the Cheltenham Library I noticed that over the years up until 1914 the Prestbury Post office was open on Sundays usually for Telegrams or Stamps. Perhaps the First World War put a stop to this practice.

If you saw the beautiful picture of Felix Sumption at my talk, he is wearing a splendid Straw Boater, because of this we can date the picture to before 1929 because that was the year when Boaters were replaced by a new uniform hat.

*Tony Noel*



# Prestbury Manor Court Rolls

*Manor Court Rolls are the record of the meetings of the regular court held by the Lord of the Manor to determine matters relating to the manorial estate and its community. 'Rolls' because they were written on vellum and stored as rolls. Though the rolls were eventually replaced by books the term is still used to describe the court records.*

The manor court had jurisdiction and applied only to those who resided in or held lands within the manor. There were two types of court: the Court Baron or manorial court, which all freeholders whose terms of tenure included suit of court and copyholders were obliged to attend.

These courts dealt with copyhold land transfers, managing the open fields, settling disputes between individuals and manorial offences. There was also a twice-yearly Court Leet, which all residents of the manor were obliged to attend. Business included a view of frankpledge, at which all men over the age of twelve were bound to appear and make their "pledge" to keep the king's peace.

In addition, the court leet dealt with the election and swearing of the jury, election of constables and the presentment of offences. There was often an overlap in the type of business conducted in the two courts so they were frequently merged as at Prestbury.

There are several Court Rolls held at Gloucestershire Archives which come from Prestbury. Within these rolls lies a great deal of local detail concerning the village and villagers and the wider Prestbury estate. Unfortunately most of them are in Latin and in an old hand. It is unlikely therefore that their story will ever be told as finding a person who could translate them and give all the required time visiting Gloucester Archives to see them is very unlikely. The alternative would be to pay a professional to do the work.

The Rolls in the Archives come from three different sources: the Manor of the Bishops of Hereford (D2622), the Manor of the Prior of Llanthony Abbey (D1637) , and the Ellenborough Estate Manor of Prestbury (D1637). The earliest one covers the years 1386-1387. There is a good representation from the 15th and 16th centuries and then some reaching up to 1871. The Ellenborough records are the deposit of the Bagehot-Delabere family of Southam and appear to cover the years 1365-1561, 1569-1742 with one record of some sort being of C.1240,

The Prestbury Court Rolls 1726-1871 (D9125/2/5953) is a single volume book. The early entries are in Latin. Later entries are in

readable English. Typical subjects- letting properties, changing tenants, rulings forbidding cattle and sheep onto roads and verges between noon from a set date – often Nov 1st. Continual requirement to keep ditches clear. Fine imposed for not obeying the courts instructions and for non-attendance.

The Court Rolls date 1663-1702 (D2622 Uncat (box 2067) is a box of four rolls, three are Court Rolls and the fourth a Rent Roll. Each roll is a bundle of vellum rolls of varying lengths, mostly in Latin but with an occasional English roll (thank goodness!) Meetings are mostly annual.

A typical roll layout is:

*Manor of Prestbury. The view of Frankpledge with the Court Leet and Court Baron of the Right Honourable Fulmar Lord Craven of Hampstead.... Lord of the Manor of Prestbury held on Saturday 11th day of October on the (regnal year) and the year of our Lord 1763, before Henry Whitaker gentleman Steward.*

*The name of the jury and homages = 12 names plus three names as homage. Present John Hathaway Constable of Prestbury, John Hall Tythingman. All persons who owe suit and service to this court and have not appeared here this day each sixpence.*

Then various orders re- ditches, mounds between lands, changes of tenant. Typical entries: No person shall keep more than 50 sheep per yardland- number varies etc.

The 1696 Rent Roll shows

Rack rents: 10 people paying total £313.10.0

Freehold: 71 people paying £24.11.8

Leasehold: 1 paying £2.10.0

Rents payable at Michaelmas: 5 paying £1.5.11

Burrough rents: 10 paying £1.00.7

*Norman Baker*

# PLHS needs YOU!

## Indexing Projects

We are looking for volunteers who'd like to help index materials relating to Prestbury. Prior experience is not necessary and we have varying roles from simply photographing/scanning material to indexing and transcribing from old documents. Some projects can be done remotely from home at a time and pace to suit you.

**Street Directories:** We are currently looking into photographing and then indexing the street directories held at Cheltenham Library with the aim of creating a person/address database for Prestbury. Once the collection has been photographed images could be taken home on USB to be indexed.

**Images of Prestbury:** I am currently digitizing and indexing the images of Prestbury that appear in the *Cheltenham Chronicle & Gloucestershire Graphic* (1901-1942). I am also creating an index of other photographs of Prestbury held at local archives/libraries or printed in books. I'd be happy to team up with some volunteers to finish the project quicker.

**Gloucestershire Archives:** There are 9 boxes of deeds in the D2217 collection of the Bagehot-Delabere family of Southam, which are not currently catalogued. We are also exploring the possibility of indexing the Prestbury Court Rolls mentioned in Norman's article. This would require training and volunteers would work from Gloucestershire Archives. The work requires an eye for detail so may not suit everybody.

## PLHS Journal

We are working towards compiling our first Journal of research articles written by PLHS members. If you have researched an aspect of Prestbury's history we'd love to hear from you. We are hoping to gather enough material together to compile our first Journal. Articles should be at least two A4 pages long and include references (and illustrations where possible). If you'd like to know more about the format for submission of articles please get in touch.

If you can help with either project please get in touch!

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

*Rebecca Sillence*

## On this day: 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1908

### Major General Thomas de Courcy Hamilton VC

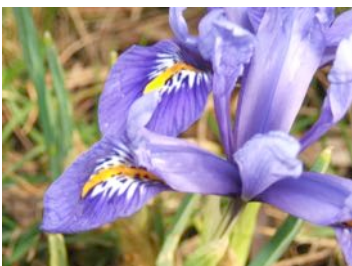
Major General Thomas de Courcy Hamilton who was born in Scotland was awarded a Victoria Cross at Sebastapol for gallantly charging with a small party into a great number of Russians and driving them from a battery.

I became interested because his obituary reports that he died in Prestbury on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1908 at the age of 82. So I checked the St Mary's graveyard list. In fact he is not buried in Prestbury but in the Cheltenham Cemetery in Bouncers Lane. His address at the time was Dunboyne, Prestbury. But of course at this time Pittville was still a part of Prestbury parish.

*Tony Noel*

## PLHS Membership 2016

It's not too late to join! Membership can be renewed for the cost of £10 for the calendar year. We are always pleased to welcome new members and guests throughout the year.



Wishing our members a Happy Easter and looking forward to seeing you on Monday April 4th.