

# Minchinhampton

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The newsletter of Minchinhampton Local History Group

No 7 April 2025

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

Editor: Martyn Beaufort

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## Editor's note:

Welcome to the second newsletter of 2025. The Baynham monument was formally unveiled last week by a member of the family. Plans for the Minchinhampton History Trail are going on, and I have been working upon the calendar for 2026. Please refer to the dates for your diary at the end of the newsletter. You will also find there, a poster for Chiz Harward's book launching on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May in the church, and the poster for our next talk on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May entitled "Secret Stroud" and presented by local author David Elder.

To those of you who came to our last talk, we were almost at capacity so I would thoroughly recommend that you get your tickets now. They're available in the Market Stores as we speak, and if you wish to email me, we can sort out payment for some by bank transfer to our account. The Market House has strict rules on capacity, so we don't want to be in the situation of turning anyone away!!

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## The Glebe Estate & George Pearce House By Gary Atkinson & Martyn Beaufort



Gary and I went to George Pearce House on a resident's request to give a talk upon the Glebe and the house. This was very much enjoyed by the attendees, and we raised £75 for the Group's funds.

I started the evening by discussing the history of the Glebe Estate. All this information was by the way provided by Gary. As you probably know my specialism is mainly dead people and Crime & Punishment!!

The word "Glebe" comes from the Latin word "Gleba" which meant in antiquity a "clod or lump of earth." However, by the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, this became commonly used to mean a "piece of land forming part of a clergyman's benefice."

Therefore, at some point this land belonged to Holy Trinity Church. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century all the land to the east of Butt Street, from Friday Street to Blue Boys Farm was listed as church land. The old rectory [Now Stuart House] was built on this land in 1721, and then cottages fronting onto Butt Street, the Coigne and the Priest's House.



The "Glebe" in 1828

However, most of it remained farmland, and because the turnpike roads and railways bypassed Minchinhampton, the population of the town stagnated. There was no pressure for building, and in 1830 just over 7 acres were listed as glebe pasture. The rest of the glebe land had been purchased from the church by the Chambers family. The Chambers family were the owners of the Blue Boy Inn.



Picture - Mrs Summers at the door of Blue Boy Farm

After the Great War, there was a need for "Homes for Heroes." In the 1930s Stroud Rural District Council provided the first "Council houses" in Minchinhampton. Such properties were built at the top of Tetbury Street, and in parts of Box Crescent and the Tynings.

In 1937, the Chambers family sold Blue Boys and 3 fields of pasture to its south-east to Arthur Summers for £1200. Two years later, the field on the corner of Butt Street and the Old Common was sold to Evan Hopkins of Tetbury. This was developed into bungalows and houses, but the old boundary of the field was preserved in the line of the new road – named after its original owner – Summersfield Road.

After World War II, Arthur Summers disposed of his two-remaining fields to Stroud Rural District Council, and this was developed over a period of time into what became the "Glebe Estate"

It was the post-war "baby-boom" which provided impetus for this development, and after initial problems with drainage (which caused more than more than one hopeful occupier to write in strong terms to the press!) 62 houses were completed in Phase One. They were built by traditional methods, of concrete block that was then rendered, in terraces of four or six. All had individual front and back gardens, featured coal sheds and were laid out around three cul-de-sacs called simply "The Glebe".

As you can see from the 1960 newspaper cutting below, sometimes the occupants had to deal with more than drainage!



By the mid-sixties, it had become apparent that further housing to rent was needed. Therefore the road was continued to the east, which necessitated the re-numbering of half the existing properties. The new properties were of a prefabricated design, composed of pre-cast concrete sections, bolted together on site. To the south of the road semi-detached houses were built; recognition of the problems of old-age and an increasing lifespan led to the provision of bungalows to the north, and also George Pearce House, an elderly persons complex with a warden. Society was changing in other ways, and the R.D.C. recognised that many houses were family occupied and provided a playground on the site. None of the houses in Phase One or Two had garages and these were provided in rows to the rear of some of the properties.

Phase Three was completed in the early seventies when the vacant land was in-filled with bungalows and semi-detached houses, of reconstructed stone, built in the traditional way. The front gardens were now open plan, although this meant that a cattle grid had to be provided on Summersfield Road to prevent damage by cattle straying from the common. It again became obvious that houses would have to be renumbered and new street names were required. The parish council were consulted and chose Trinity Drive [from the parish church], Syon Road [from the Abbey which had owned the manor in medieval times] and Eastfield Road [from one of the open fields which had lain adjacent to the Glebe] – now called Glebe Road.

The small portion of land that remained was sold to a private developer, who built the 11 luxury bungalows of Summersfield Close in the late seventies. Meanwhile, political will wrought changes to the rest of the estate. The Tory “Right to Buy” legislation encouraged tenants to buy the properties they occupied, and a good proportion of the houses are now privately owned, finding expression in the increasing individuality of the houses and gardens. The provision of accommodation for the elderly is safeguarded, as these remain in S.D.C. ownership. By the nineties, however, it became apparent that there was a shortage of “low cost” housing anywhere in Minchinhampton, and the play area was relocated, further land purchased and Phase Four, semi-detached houses built by a Housing Association, were constructed. These carry the name of the Bulwarks – the ancient earthwork to the south of the site.

The Glebe Estate is a true landmark in the town of Minchinhampton and provides a good example of how a housing area evolves through the years. As the earliest houses approach their half-century, it is apparent that this evolution will continue throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

George Pearce House and the search for who George Pearce was.

George Pearce House belongs to Stroud District Council and comprises a complex [in an “X” shape] of 25 flats and bungalows. It was opened in 1968 and renovated in 2021. One of the mysteries that Gary had to tackle was “Who on earth was George Pearce”

Gary first looked to see if he could find a “George Pearce” who was born in Minchinhampton. Ancestry.com had the answer and he discovered George Obadiah Pearce who was born in 1830 in our town. However, even though he appeared in the

1841 census as living in Minchinhampton, by 1861 he lived in Leeds and died there on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 1900. With such a short connection to Minchinhampton, could this be the George Pearce after whom George Pearce House was named over a hundred years later?

Gary then asked himself who owned George Pearce House, and who therefore would have chosen the name when it opened. The answer was Stroud District Council. Gary has contacts within the council namely our two green councillors. So, he emailed Chloe Turner and Gill Thomas. They were able to confirm that George Obediah Pearce was not the right George Pearce.

This is the email he received: -

Hi Gary,

This is what the Council have provided by way of background to the name, though it's not entirely certain and may be worth following up with the parish council in case they have more detail:

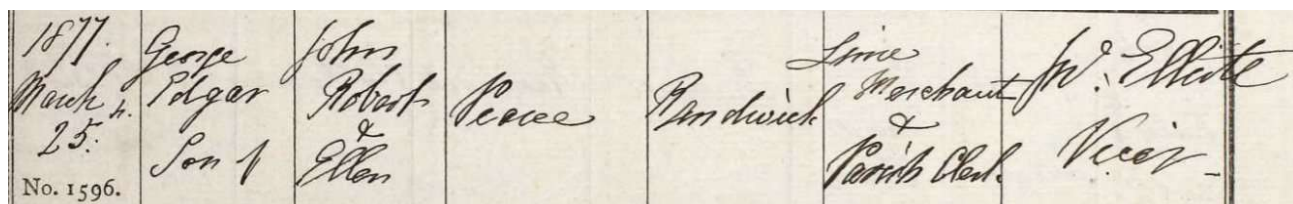
*"It may have been a George Edgar Pierce, who was born in Randwick in 1877 and died in Littleworth in 1973. He worked overseas, mostly in Argentina, and came back to Minch to retire. He worked as a fuel supervisor for Stroud Rural District Council (presumably as a volunteer) during the 1939/1945 war and so this may relate to him being remembered through the naming of the building"*

Good to see you last night, and very glad the quiz went so well.

Best wishes

Chloe

Armed with this information, Gary went back to ancestry.com to follow up the new line of research. He confirmed that this George Pearce was born on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January 1877 in Randwick.



His parents were John Robert Pearce [1853-1926] and Ellen Pearce nee Barling [1850-1887], and he had 5 siblings all of whom were sisters.

1881 Census Living in Warwickshire Age 4

John H. Pearce	Head
Edith Do	Wife
Mabel L. Do	Daughter
George E. Do	Son
Yentledge E. Do	Daughter
Winched M. Do	Daughter

The family had moved to Warwickshire by 1881, where his father is stated to be a farmer of 32 acres.

By 1901, George was described as a clerk in a Cocoa factory. As will be seen later this was the Cadbury's Bournville factory in Birmingham.

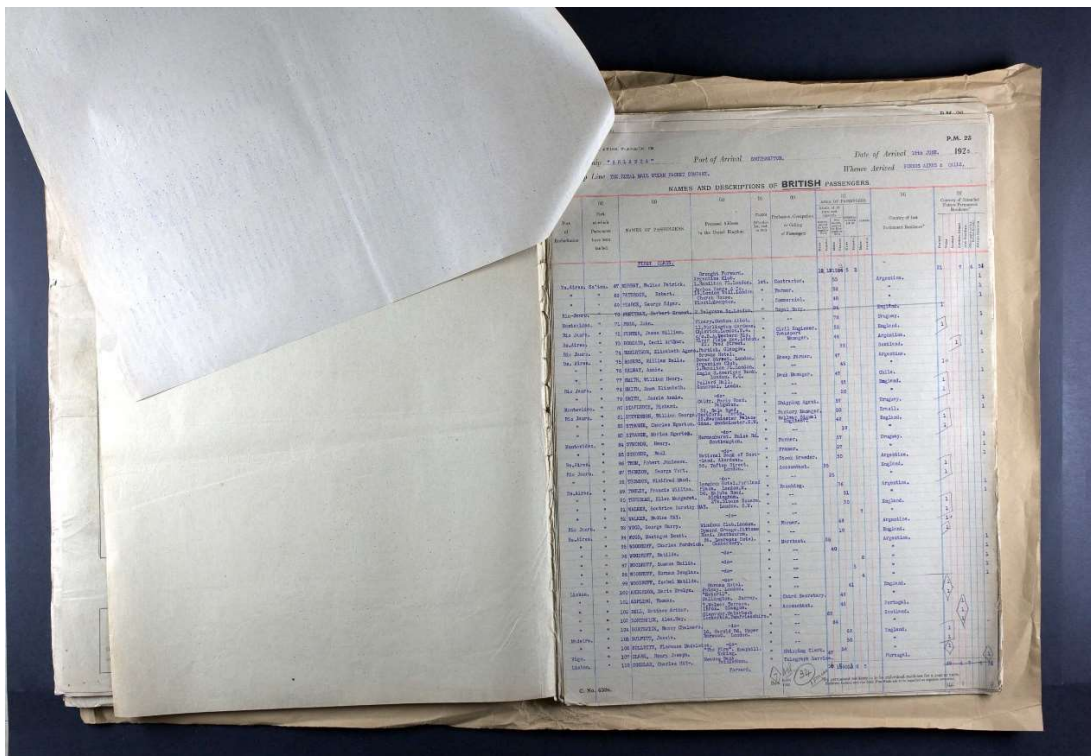
He married Maud Brunston [see below] in 1904.

No.	When Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the Time of Marriage	Father's Name and Surname	Rank or Profession of Father
241	March 31 <sup>st</sup>	George Edgar Pearce	27	Bachelor	Correspondence Clerk	29 Brantton Road, Kings Heath	John Robert Pearce	Secretary
		Maud Brunton	26	Spinster		Beale Cottage, Alcester Lane End	William Horner Brunton deceased	Clerk

Married in the District Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by Thomas Utley or after James Robert Wilkins by us, Robert Wilkins Archdeacon, Worcester

This Marriage was solemnized between us, George Edgar Pearce and Maud Brunton in the Presence of us, Thomas Utley and William Lloyd

By 1911 we know that George was in Buenos Ayres, because he became a member of the freemasons there. Gary has also dug out various details of crossings back and forwards as a Commercial Traveller. Most noteworthy is the one below from 1925, which states that his address in England is to be "Church House, Minchinhampton" Unfortunately, this is not an address that is familiar to us unless it is one of the buildings near present day Henrys.



Further, the following one [from 1927] shows that he was not only a Commercial Traveller, but worked for Cadburys in Bournville. Argentina is a producer of some fine cocoa beans.

PART 28									
Part of arrival - 1927									
NAME AND DESCRIPTION OF BRITISH PASSENGERS									
No.	Sex	Age	State of Birth	Place of Birth	Profession	Age	Country of Birth	Country of Birth	Country of Birth
PART 28									
1	M	30	England	London	Engineer	39	Argentina	1	
2	M	70	England	London	Housewife	20	"	1	
3	M	72	England	London	Housewife	56	"		1
4	M	72	England	London	Housewife	45	"		1
5	M	73	England	London	Commercial	25	"		1
6	M	74	England	London	Spinster	20	"		1
7	M	75	England	London	"	18	"		1
8	M	76	England	London	Commercial	50	"		1
9	M	77	England	London	Director	46	England	1	
10	M	78	England	London	Student	20	"	1	
11	M	79	England	London	Rancher	61	Argentina		1
12	M	80	England	London	Housewife	61	"		1
13	M	81	England	London	Spinster	23	"		1
14	M	82	England	London	Rancher	46	"		1
15	M	83	England	London	Housewife	45	"		1
16	M	84	England	London	Metropolitan Victoria Works Co. Engineer	25	England		1
17	M	85	England	London	"	44	Brazil		1
18	M	86	England	London	Princess Hotel, Bournemouth	61	England	1	
19	M	87	England	London	ditto	56	"	1	
20	M	88	England	London	ditto	55	"	1	
21	M	89	England	London	Queens Mansions Manager	51	Argentina		1
22	M	90	England	London	ditto	45	"		1
23	M	91	England	London	At Woodland, St John's, Woking	40	Brazil	1	
24	M	92	England	London	ditto	39	"	1	
25	M	93	England	London	C/o Australian Bank of Commerce, Threadneedle St.	22	Australia		1
26	M	94	England	London	Seymour St, Marble Arch, W.1	37	"	1	
27	M	95	England	London	Mormanshurst, Hales Rd, W.1	59	Uruguay		1
28	M	96	England	London	At Woodland, St John's, W.1	39	England	1	



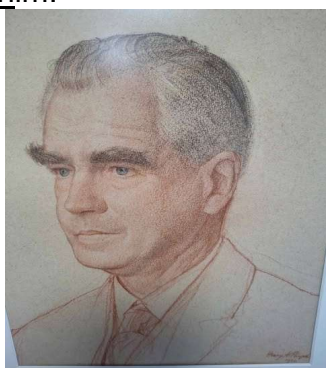
Gary also discovered that George Pearce lived in retirement [1939] at a house called the Beacon in Amberley, and that for his services as a Local Fuel Overseer for Stroud District Council he was awarded an MBE in 1951.



Beacon House, Amberley

George Edgar Pearce died on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 1973, and in his will left £15928 [About £200,000 today], but if that amount included the value of the house above in effect considerably more than that!

Also to cap it all, there is a portrait of George Edgar Pearce in the house named after him: -



## **A Tribute to Mr. Fenning Parke and the Reverend Edward Blackwell**

**By Brian Lett**



Historians owe a huge debt of gratitude to those who during their lifetimes compile diaries and records of any kind, which they then leave behind them for historians, often after many years, to study. Minchinhampton is extremely fortunate that the two men named above did just that, and thereby greatly enriched the history of Minchinhampton as we know it today.

When I first arrived in Minchinhampton a few years ago, three plaques on the wall of Holy Trinity Church caught my eye – they were dedicated to the memory of an Admiral, a Colonel and a Brigadier, all with the surname Ricardo. As a historian, I wanted to learn a bit more about them and began a happy journey of research. The Ricardos owned and occupied Gatcombe Park

from 1814 until 1939, and four generations of them lived there.

Mr. Fenning Parke [pictured above] was by profession a schoolmaster. He first arrived in Minchinhampton off a coach from London at the age of 16 years in 1818 and stayed for 54 years until his death in 1872. He had been recruited to teach at the Market House school by Mr. and Mrs. David Ricardo, who had bought Gatcombe Park in 1814. Fenning Parke was later appointed by the Rector [then the Reverend William Cockin] to be the Vestry Clerk and the Parish Clerk in 1824. He was appointed to be the Collector of Tithe Rents in 1841, and Registrar of Births in May 1845. He lived until 1872 and therefore undoubtedly would have known all four generations of the Ricardo family – David the First, David the Second, Henry David and finally Henry George, the last of the Ricardo Lords of the Manor of Minchinhampton [The latter was aged 12 at the time of Fenning Parke's death]

Fenning Parke was involved in so many aspects of local life that he became a veritable "Mr. Minchinhampton". Indeed, post to him was addressed simply: "Mr. Parke, Minchinhampton."

To the historian, Fenning Parke's greatest virtue was a clerical one – he recorded numerous events in the life of Minchinhampton Town. He created, in longhand, a series of records entitled the "Minchinhampton Chronicles", which are now held in the Gloucester Archives. He also, as Parish and Vestry Clerk, recorded what was going on in church affairs. For a historian seeking to know what life was like in Minchinhampton between 1818 and 1872, his records and chronicles are a gift from the gods.

Fenning Parke even recorded some of Minchinhampton's history before he arrived here telling us that the last bull baiting event [a regular Minchinhampton "sport"] occurred at the cross-roads in the centre of the town in 1817. Happily, its successors were the slightly more civilised sports of cricket and golf!

Thank you, Mr. Fenning Parke! Your records are invaluable.



The second gentleman to whom I must express my sincere thanks, and those of all historians, is the Reverend R. Edward Blackwell. [pictured above]

David Ricardo the Second was a great builder of churches, and the first church that he paid for and built was Holy Trinity, Amberley in 1835, with church schools for the local children in its basement.

Amberly became a separate parish, and its church was consecrated in September 1836. David Ricardo the Second was its patron and appointed the Reverend Blackwell to be the Rector.

Blackwell remained in his post until 1872, a total of 36 years. He established the parish from scratch and kept many interesting records of how he did so.

However, undoubtedly his greatest historical achievement was to develop a passion for photography, and to compile a series of photograph albums, mainly containing very good quality photographs of his friends, his parishioners and the visiting clergy who preached in his church. They are now held by the Gloucester Archives. Thus, he preserved for posterity a real feel of the parish and of neighbouring Minchinhampton.

Three generations of the Ricardos are pictured there, Fenning Parke is there and many others.

For an author searching through piles of dusty old documents, Rev. Blackwell's photograph albums shine out like a beacon, bringing life in the 19th century blazing into the 21st.

Thank you, Reverend Blackwell!

Brian Lett

Editor's Note: Brian hopes that his book, working title "The Ricardos of Gatcombe Park" will be out before the end of this year.

## Chiz Harward – Question and Answers



### 1) What led you into a career in Archaeology?

As a boy I was always interested in history, being outside, and digging holes and tunnels (usually in the wrong place in the garden). I started volunteering on local archaeological digs in my holidays and when I left school I got a job on the local Brighton Bypass excavations. Archaeology gave me the perfect mix of mental and physical exercise, combining observation, recording and illustration, assessment and deduction of complex evidence, communication, and hard graft with good people. I got into university and ended up in London working on some of Britain's biggest archaeological sites including Spitalfields Market where we excavated over 10,000 burials and whole streets of buildings. I moved to Stroud fifteen years ago to work for a local archaeology company but went back to working for myself where being my own boss means I can choose the projects I work on, and where I can pursue any interesting looking diversions, I find along the way. I've been very lucky to work with, and have the support of, some fantastic archaeologists and have always tried to make a 'career' in archaeology more sustainable for everyone in it.

### 2) What has been your most significant find a) generally and b) Minchinhampton and why?

The most significant find was probably in London where we were excavating on the edge of the early Roman settlement at Plantation Place. I found part of a pair of 'V' shaped ditches, and days later a turf and timber rampart. It looked like part of a military fort and looking elsewhere on the site more and more features worked with this interpretation -it all fitted and made sense. Of course, it took a lot more very careful work on and off-site to disentangle all the evidence and reveal the full ground plan and confirm the date: the fort was built after Queen Boudicca's rebellion of AD 60-61 had razed Londinium to the ground and was the base from which the Roman army reconstructed the town's infrastructure. Its finding made sense of a confused period in the archaeology of London and resolved several longstanding problems with its chronology and finds.

In Minch working in the Market House undercroft was really fascinating, but the church is really very special. The excavations revealed important finds that have told us about 'lost' parts of the church: fragments of limestone slab inscribed with the design of medieval window tracery, architectural mouldings, plaster painted with 16th century English text, and the documentary research has revealed many small details that have helped illustrate how the church building and worship changed over time. One of the most satisfying parts was probably the disentangling of the early 14th century church, including the dedications of the effigies in the south transept, the construction dates of the different parts, and the architectural significance in the wider development of Decorated Gothic architecture -the latter greatly aided by Jon Cannon who sadly died recently. But of course, it is the synthesis of all the evidence into the

story of the whole church that is most significant and has given us a fascinating example of a parish church over the centuries.

3) How important do you think the find of the Baynham monument is?

The poignant memorial to Anne Baynham who died aged less than a month in 1632 is a quite extraordinary finding. Hidden since 1878 by the organ, it is fantastic that it has been moved to the narthex where it can be appreciated by everyone -well done MLHG for fundraising and everyone who contributed!

Most of the monument is in Painswick Stone and would have been carved by a local monumental mason, but the effigy is carved in English alabaster, a very soft and beautiful stone. That part was probably carved in a specialist workshop, perhaps near the stone quarry, or perhaps in a major centre such as London.

We know that in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the monument was located on the North side of the chancel and that it included two more courses, one with the Baynham coat of arms. The monument was moved to the north transept in 1842 at which point the top two courses were left off, and some clumsy repairs were made. The recent move to the narthex meant that all the pieces of the monument could be inspected and recorded which has given us more insight into how it was made, and how it was moved in 1842.

The big question of course is why a memorial to a newborn has the effigy of a young child rather than a baby. I'm still researching other examples of child memorials and talking to experts, but the Baynham monument is certainly a significant addition and further research will hopefully reveal more of its secrets.

4) You are bringing out a book on the church on the 17th of May. No spoilers, but could you give us a brief overview?

The book is the result of several years excavation and research at the church. When we completed the main reordering, we needed to write a report on the findings, talking to the PCC, architect and Diocese we all agreed that we wanted to make the findings accessible to as many people as possible, not hidden away in a technical report. As I researched the church the project developed into a book that would tell the story of the whole church, not just the excavations. The book takes a chronological approach to the church, using the archaeological evidence and finds, documents, plans, illustrations and eye-witness accounts to describe the building in each period. The weaving together of all the disparate strands of evidence was one of the most satisfying parts of writing the book and I hope the readers will enjoy it.

The story starts with the tantalising suggestions of Norman architecture -how similar to its sister church at Avening was the church? The biggest changes to the church were in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century when most of the church was rebuilt in the Decorated Gothic style, with the exceptional architecture of the south transept. The Cotswolds are famous for their Norman churches and the Perpendicular Wool Churches, those with substantial Decorated elements are far less common, making Minch very important. Although some of the Decorated church was demolished in 1842, we can reconstruct much of the church from the strands of evidence.

The upheavals of the Reformation are seen through the Churchwardens' accounts, with the alternating purchase and disposal of Catholic and Protestant items, books and sundries. As the Protestant faith developed, the church changed focus from altar to pulpit; pews and galleries were built, all recorded by the local Schoolmaster and Parish Clerk Fenning Parke.

The lead up to the rebuilding of the church in 1842 (including the demolition of the chancel, nave, aisles and porch) shows the pivotal role of David Ricardo the Younger in the town at this time, but also the wider background to the decision to rebuild and local concerns at who would pay! The 'church newly built' was designed by Bristol architect Thomas Foster just before the impact of the Gothic Revival changed the way we thought about churches and architecture, so it is perhaps no surprise that Revival architect William Burges was less than impressed by Foster's work. Burges rebuilt the chancel adding the brilliant double-place tracery, echoing the south transept's wheel window.

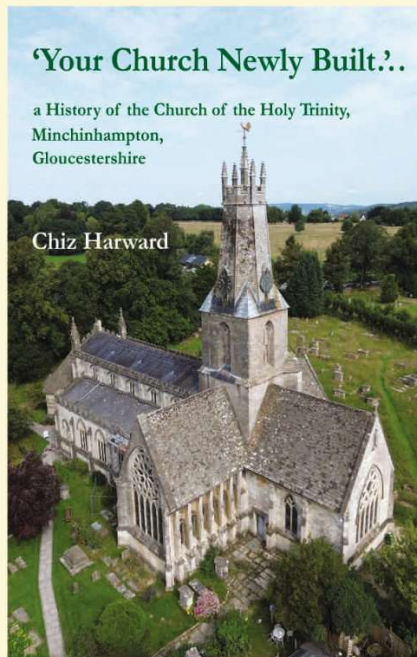
The book tells the story of the church, but also of its people and their faith and ambitions. I hope it will be of interest to locals, visitors and historians alike. There will be a launch at the church on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May, and I'll be giving a talk on the church. The book will be available to buy from the church with proceeds (and all royalties) going to the stained-glass project.

5) What are your interests outside Archaeology.

I also work as a coppice worker and charcoal-burner, as an illustrator, and sometimes I get time to rock-climb

# Holy Trinity Church, Minchinhampton

You are cordially invited to the launch of a new book on the fascinating history of Holy Trinity church, Minchinhampton: 'Your Church Newly Built...' by local archaeologist Chiz Harward.



Please join us for an evening celebration of the recent reordering with a talk on the church by the author, an update on the stained glass project, and refreshments.

Copies of the book will be available for purchase (£20, all royalties to the church) and to be signed.

**17th May 2025 at Holy Trinity church,  
Minchinhampton, from 6pm for 7pm**

**~Donations to the Stained Glass Appeal~**



Picture: STATE LIBRARY, VICTORIA

## BOUND FOR BOTANY BAY

The hangman's noose awaited William 'Long' Niblett, a notorious criminal who lived in Stroud. Instead, he was



A monumental arch on a street corner in Stroud. Who knew?

transported aboard this ship, the Mangles, to the Australian penal colony of Botany Bay. His crime and how he escaped execution is among the many fascinating events to be related by historian David Elder, author of *Secret Stroud*. Join him for an

### ILLUSTRATED TALK

### MINCHINHAMPTON MARKET HOUSE

**Friday May 23 starting  
at 7.30pm**

Tickets £5 (cash please) from the Premier Market Store, Minchinhampton, (£4 for members of Minchinhampton Local History Group) or on the door (cash or card). Licensed bar. Presented by Minchinhampton Local History Group.

## Dates For Your Diary

### 2025

May 17 – Holy Trinity Church – Chiz Harward – Church book signing and talk.

May 23 – The Market House – David Elder – Secret Stroud.

Jun 27 – The Market House – Chiz Harward – Title to be advised.

Sep 19 – The Market House – Richard Davis – Tom Long's Post.

Oct 31 - The Market House – Kirsty Hartsiotis –Ghosts in the Stones: Supernatural Tales in Gloucestershire.

Nov 7 – The Market House – Remembrance talk – Title to be advised.

Dec 19 – The Market House – MLHG – AGM [+ Talk = TBA]

### 2026

Jan 24 – The Market House – Howard Beard – Title TBA

Mar 20 – The Market House – Stuart Butler – Radical Stroud

Apr 17 – The Market House – Ian Mackintosh – Life and Times at: Longford Mills and Ham Mills

Oct 30 – The Market House – John Putley – Witchfynder - History of witches and tales of Gloucestershire witches

Nov 6 – The Market House – Andy Meller – The Glosters at Waterloo.

Dec 11 – The Market House – Patrick Furley – Magic Lantern Christmas Show followed by AGM.