

Pittville History Works

How you can help ...

Our areas of work	What you need in order to help ...
<p>1. Collecting biographical information; building up a picture of individuals and families who lived or worked in the Pittville area; writing brief life stories for them, with particular reference to their time in Pittville.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in biography. • Good research skills.
<p>2. Transcribing the UK censuses (1841/1911) for the Pittville area and collecting information on householders from the Cheltenham street directories for this period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to <i>ancestry.com</i> or <i>findmypast.com</i>. • Experience in reading old documents and understanding (sometimes quite difficult) old handwriting. • Ability to visit the Cheltenham Local Studies Centre to transcribe street directories.
<p>3. Investigating the history and architecture of the buildings of Pittville.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest/expertise in buildings, their architecture and their history. • Good research skills. • Access to the internet for listed building information.
<p>4. Using the database to explore aspects of life in Pittville (family structures, social mobility, business, domestic service, recreational activity, etc.) and presenting our findings on the web site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest/expertise in social history. • Ability to investigate and analyse data.
<p>5. Building a gallery of photographic or other pictorial images of all aspects of Pittville life in the past, and taking photos for the website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest/expertise in researching old photographs and other images. • Taking good quality photographs of buildings for the web site.
<p>6. Mapping Pittville: developing web links from historic maps of Pittville to information about the houses and other buildings/sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest/expertise in mapping, particularly online mapping.

7. Communicating our findings to the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills, including social media (blogging, Facebook, Twitter etc.).
8. Developing and maintaining our website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website design and maintenance skills.

See more details about each of these areas of work below ...

1. Collecting biographical information about Pittville residents

One of the groups of pages on our Pittville History Works web site is called “Pittville People”. On this page we list people who have lived in Pittville over the years – not just famous people, but anyone whose life is interesting and sheds light on the area. See also <https://pittvillehistory.org.uk/wpt/pittville-lives/>

Each of the short descriptions on the page is the start of a link to another page or pages containing further and more detailed information. Some of the pages are “lives” that we have written ourselves, others are links to biographies written by other people and found on the Internet.

Many of the lives have been written as we came across interesting people while transcribing data from the censuses and street directories. Others have been suggested by group members, or discovered in other sources.

We would very much like to extend this written record of people who have lived in Pittville, and so are keen to find new people to write about, and new people to write about them!

Groups of people to work on might include former soldiers; former employees of the East India Company or the Indian Civil Service; or domestic servants.

2. Census and directory transcriptions

For this aspect of the project you will need a subscription to *ancestry.com* or *findmypast.com*. You will need to be good at reading old documents and understanding sometimes quite difficult old handwriting. Our objective is to collect census and related information for all of the houses in Pittville (specifically, the “Pittville Character Area”), and to make this information available on the Pittville History Works web site.

Each researcher is allocated a group of houses, and finds where they are listed in the various censuses. They are given a spreadsheet to fill in for each of their houses.

Here is a completed section of the spreadsheet for the family of James Creed (a local builder who was much involved with the early development of the Pittville estate) in 1851:

James Creed	Head	Head	Married	47	Builder & Deal Merchant	Stroud, Gloster	Gloucestershire, Stroud
Sarah Creed	Wife	Wife	Married	41		Eastington, Gloster	Gloucestershire, Eastington
Fanny Creed	Daughter	Daughter		17	Teacher of Music	Cheltenham, Gloster	Gloucestershire, Cheltenham
George Creed	Son	Son		8		Cheltenham, Gloster	Gloucestershire, Cheltenham
Eliza Baffin	Servant	Servant		20	Servant	Nailbridge, Gloster	Gloucestershire, Nailbridge
Margaret D. Robson	Lodger	Lodger		56		Tetbury, Gloster	Gloucestershire, Tetbury
Sophia Creed	Daughter	Daughter	Unmarried	10		Cheltenham, Gloster	Gloucestershire, Cheltenham
Sarah Armstrong	Lodger	Lodger	Widow	50		[illegible], Dorset	Dorsetshire, [illegible]

The census for 1851 shows that James Creed was living with his wife, son, two daughters, two lodgers, and a servant in one of the houses at the Gates end of Pittville Lawn. He came from Stroud, and his children were all born in Cheltenham.

Here is a copy of the original census document for James Creed's family in 1851. We can expand the size, but it can still be tricky to read!

Once we have transcribed our range of houses, they are re-checked for accuracy by another group member, and in due course they are loaded on to the public web site.

Once we have completed the census entries for a particular range of houses, we turn our attention to what the Cheltenham street directories say about the same residences. The directories list the principal occupant of a house each year. We work from the original documents in the Cheltenham Local Studies Centre and write out the details on to a template (or key them directly on to a spreadsheet). Once the data has been reviewed, it is loaded on to the web site.

Here is the entry for Pittville Terrace (part of Clarence Road) in the *Cheltenham Annuaire* (the main local directory) for 1865:

- Pittville Ter., Portland St., E**
- 1 Mrs E. Graham**
 - 2 Mrs Alder**
 - 4 Mrs C. Squire**
 - 5 Rev S. Rabbitts**

and this is how the information from 1865-70 is reproduced on our template, ready for loading on to the web site:

Cheltenham Annuaire	Cheltenham Annuaire	Cheltenham Annuaire	Cheltenham Annuaire	Cheltenham Annuaire	Cheltenham Annuaire
1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870
Mrs. E. Graham	Mrs. E. Graham	Mrs. E. Graham	[no entry]	Mrs Graham	Mrs Graham
Mrs Alder	Mr Hodge	Mrs Gibson	Mrs Gibson	Mrs Gibson	Mrs Gibson
[no entry]	Mr Cullis	Mr Cullis	Mr Cullis	Mrs Aldington	Mrs Aldington
Mrs. C. Squire	Mrs. C. Squire	Mrs. C. Squire	Rev. J. M. Conolly	[no entry]	Mrs Lidiard
Rev. S. Rabbits	[no entry]	[no entry]	[no entry]	[no entry]	Miss Cousins
[no entry]	[no entry]	Mrs. M. James	[no entry]	Mr H. Marks	Mr H. Marks
[no entry]	[no entry]	[no entry]	[no entry]	Mr Cooper	Mr Cooper

3. Investigating Pittville's buildings

There is plenty of information available about the buildings of Pittville. Any listed building has a description accessible online; booklets such as Steven Blake's *Pittville* document the early ownership of houses and their plots of land; and today's owners often have access to their deeds, from which more information can be gleaned.

We are hoping to have a house description, compiled from records such as these, for most of the houses in Pittville. Sometimes the current owners may write them, and sometimes we might. If this is the sort of thing that interests you, there is lots of work to do.

4. Using the database to study Pittville's social history

There are new facts about Pittville waiting to be discovered in our database as it grows. Are you interested in social mobility, such as the movement of people in the nineteenth century from the Gloucestershire villages into towns like Cheltenham? Would you enjoy investigating the different "profile" of roads in Pittville according to the occupations of their inhabitants? Perhaps you'd like to compare the gender balance between the well-heeled and their servants, or find out whether servants moved round to different families or stayed with one employer.

There are countless avenues of investigations and research waiting to be explored, and we'd like to publish the findings on our web site.

5. Photographs and images of Pittville and its people

We already have a number of images on the site – of places, people, and even architectural features. But if collecting old photographs and images of Pittville (or of some aspect of life here) particularly interests you, then talk to us about it and we'll see if we can allocate a section of the web site to your discoveries.

6. Mapping Pittville

We have already put historical maps of Pittville on the web site, with links to pages describing particular buildings, people, or other features. There is much more that could be done, so if this is something for which you have some technical competence, we'd love to hear from you.

7. Communication

At the moment we are a small group, but our information is potentially of interest to a wide audience. We can't do everything ourselves, and we'd be particularly interested in finding someone who would like to spearhead our public communication via Twitter, Facebook, or even a regular blog.

8. Website

Unlike conventional local history groups, our web site is at the heart of what we do. It enables people to carry out their own searches of our data and to follow up areas of particular interest to them. We also believe strongly in sharing our discoveries as widely and quickly as possible and new information is published online immediately. If you have skills in website and database design and maintenance we can certainly find you plenty to do!

9. Other projects

There are lots of Pittville-related historical projects we haven't even thought of. If there is one that you'd like to follow up, please come along with a proposal to us.

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