

**The League of Nations Union in Cheltenham, 1920-45:
charting the *terra incognita***

**A case study of the workings of a League of Nations Union local branch
and popular participation in international liberalism**

by

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Abstract:

This thesis documents the development, activities, and membership of the Cheltenham branch of the League of Nations Union in the 1920s and 1930s. In the years following the First World War, the LNU became a mass movement with a national membership that peaked at 406,868. Alongside the London headquarters, over three hundred local branches were established nationally. To fully understand the impact and growth of British views on international liberalism and global humanitarianism, historians must also pay attention to the nature and activities of those groups and individuals who served (or ignored) it at grassroots level.

This thesis breaks new ground by focusing on the work of one branch rather than on the national politics and leadership of the LNU. By placing the organisation's local context and membership at the centre of analysis, the thesis provides a grassroots case study of the work of an important non-government organisation. It also offers an immediate and tangible example of how the LNU engaged with a wider audience and was entwined with associational and political life in an English town. It presents an alternative means of understanding how the political education of the nation in the debate around foreign policy developed between 1918 to 1939.

As a latitudinal study, the thesis traces the history of the Cheltenham branch from the development and success of its early years to the growing disinterest and collapse in the thirties. Revisionist historians have argued that the LNU's mass membership led to greater levels of democratization and active engagement in a political culture around foreign policy. Others suggest that for the middle classes (who made up the bulk of LNU membership) 'formal association' with such groups was synonymous with friendship. The result was often a passive membership in search of education and entertainment. This study of the CLNU underscores how these interpretations are not mutually exclusive: the shifting balance between these coexisting positions depended on events which challenged the nation's foreign policy and perceptions of its standing in the world.

Drawing upon archival material, local and national newspaper reports, and a prosopographical survey of digitised genealogical data, the thesis reconstructs the membership and activities of a working portrait of a single LNU branch over two decades. In the absence of a surviving branch archive, the thesis stitches together these fragments and places them in the wider context of Cheltenham's civic life and politics. In so doing, it offers a proximity to the motivation and loyalty (and at times, fickleness) of ordinary men and women whose voices have often been overlooked or have been inaccessible to historians working on the LNU and similar organisations in the 1920s and 1930s.

The thesis is in four main sections. The first (chapter 1) places the investigation within a wider historiography of the League of Nations Union. It examines how historians have viewed its importance as a mass movement, then sets out the strengths and merits of the case study methodology and sources that underpin the thesis. The thesis questions the notion that the LNU acted as a catalyst for democratising in the inter-war period. The second section (chapter 2) traces the development of the CLNU over two decades, highlighting key moments – notably its hosting of the LNU's National Conference in 1932 and its local organisation of the Peace Ballot in 1934. It also introduces (chapter 3) my detailed prosopographical study of the branch membership lists. Alongside a quantitative analysis of the data, the thesis also presents detailed case studies of individual members of the CLNU. These chapters argue that despite its popular base the Union was dominated by national and local elites.

The third section (chapters 4-7) situates the work of the LNU within the wider local social, cultural, and political context through four thematic studies of the CLNU's relations with local political parties, education and youth, women, and the churches. This approach considers why, and to what extent, these groups associated with the LNU. Whilst the thesis maintains a strong local focus, it also reflects on the national behaviours of such groups. The thesis argues that whilst support for the Union was non-partisan, it was drawn mainly from middle class groups and institutions.

The final section (chapter 8) identifies opposition faced by the CLNU and its implications for the branch. The thesis here argues that despite the copious amounts of propaganda and literature provided by the Union, it encountered significant opposition and competition from many other quarters. The thesis concludes (chapter 9) by situating the case study within the wider debate around the growth of democracy in the interwar period. It also considers some broader implications as to how a pressure group needs to act if it is to remain sustainable and effective. The argument here is that there was a significant disconnect between the leadership of the Union and its branch members which suggests that for a mass movement, membership numbers alone were illusory. Its development was prone to both internal and external weaknesses. With respect to the former, the LNU drew support from a relatively narrow section of society and failed to make significant inroads into working class and Labour voting groups. A perceived heavy-handed over-directiveness from the national leadership also created a membership that felt increasingly redundant other than for the purpose of paying their subscription.

Over two decades external circumstances also presented new challenges for the LNU. After the slaughter of the First World War, there was a broad sympathy of support for an international movement looking to avoid future wars through diplomacy. For example, many of those who joined the CLNU had personal experience of loss and were prepared to judge war as a bad thing. However, despite its initial success in enthusing and cultivating members, the LNU failed to adapt to meet new geopolitical threats and mobilise local communities. By the 1930s there needed to be a national response to those dictatorships that threatened democracy – even if this meant resorting to force of arms. In this context, it became increasingly difficult for the LNU to justify its cause and answer its critics.

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I wish to express my thanks to my two supervisors, Professors Matt Houlbrook and Nick Crowson of the University of Birmingham, for their invaluable advice and guidance for me to look for fresh insights into the interwar period. Their comments have been very much the anvil on which this thesis has been forged. I would also like to add a note of thanks to Professor Helen McCarthy for encouraging me to pursue my interest in the LNU and to build upon her own body of work.

I would also like to express my gratitude to those librarians and archivists who made their collections accessible even through the difficulties of the 2020 pandemic. In this respect, Sue Killoran, Senior Librarian at Manchester Harris College, Oxford, Rachel Roberts, Archivist at Cheltenham Ladies College and Hannah Dale, Archivist at Cheltenham College deserve special mention for their generosity in time spent tracking down material. Also to all the staff of the LSE reading room for making me welcome there on my many visits.

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Warning: This thesis uses verbatim contemporary references which may contain language or terms which modern readers will consider inappropriate. Inverted commas are used to make it clear where these occur.

This thesis uses the MHRA Style Guide.

List of abbreviations

CLNU	Cheltenham League of Nations Union Branch
CWCA	Cheltenham Women's Citizens' Association
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LNU	League of Nations Union
LON	League of Nations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SCF	Save the Children Fund
UNA	United Nations Association
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

Introduction

This thesis documents the development, activities, and membership of the Cheltenham branch of the League of Nations Union in the 1920s and 1930s. In the years following the First World War, the LNU became a mass movement with a national membership that peaked at 406,868. Alongside the London headquarters, over three hundred local branches were established nationally. To fully understand the impact and growth of British views on international liberalism and global humanitarianism, historians need to give attention to the nature and activities of those groups and individuals who served (or ignored) it at grassroots level. In comparison to much of the early historiography of the movement, by placing the LNU's local context and membership at the centre of its analysis, the thesis breaks new ground by focusing on the work of one branch rather than on the national politics and leadership. It offers an immediate and tangible example of how a non-governmental organisation, in this case the LNU, engaged with a wider audience and was entwined with associational and political life in an English town. It presents an alternative means of understanding the growth of a democratic political culture among individuals and small groups, particularly in the way it developed a national debate around foreign policy in the interwar years.

A case study helps bridge the gap between impersonal, lofty and, at times, imprecise political ideals of organisations and the real motivations, intentions, and reception of individuals. In the example of the LNU, it can help us understand the motivation and loyalty (and at times, fickleness) of ordinary men and women whose voices and views on the conduct of foreign policy have so often been overlooked or have been inaccessible to historians until now. In part, such a case study as this has been made more possible by two comparatively recent developments in the study of history itself. The first is the growth of interest in local history, often carried out by local historical societies or by amateur historians working in their locality (at times with extra-mural or distance learning support from academics). The second is the growth of a digitised on-line catalogue of local newspapers.

This case study gives a nuanced understanding of aspects of the wider debate concerning Britain's political development in the 1920s and 1930s. A question frequently asked by historians is how much did public participation in, and awareness of politics, change over these two decades. For some historians, the interwar years in Britain were a time of significant national reflection and social and political change. Beers and Thomas write,

The advent of mass democracy after 1918 meant that interwar Britons had an unprecedented opportunity to shape the development of the British nation. While 'public opinion' had always played a role in policy-making, the franchise reforms of 1918 and 1928 greatly expanded the scope of the political public. The emergence of a new mass media similarly expanded the number of voices claiming to speak for that public, and to articulate an agenda for both domestic and imperial reform.¹

A counter-argument states that any growth of democracy in the interwar period was slow, restrained by established tradition, and that any fundamental changes only took place much later towards the end of the century. Ross McKibbin argues that 'by the mid-1920s a social peace was achieved which enthroned the middle class but which did not unseat the upper class and effectively subordinated the working class.'²

It [Britain] was, certainly after 1918, understood by nearly all its inhabitants, to be a democracy. On the other hand, all this was achieved within a formally monarchic-aristocratic-ceremonial-hierarchic and in some spheres class-exclusive society.³

Dan LeMahieu has expressed a more cautious view against the pace of interwar changes. He argues that although new forms of communication evolved in this period (mass media including films,

¹ Beers, L. and Thomas, G., 'Introduction. Nation and 'nations' in inter-war Britain', in *Brave New World: Imperial and Democratic Nation-Building in Britain between the Wars*, ed. by Laura Beers and Geraint Thomas (University of London, Institute of Historical Research, London, 2011), p.38.

² McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951* (King's Lynn, 2000), p.528. He expresses a similar view in the *Parties and People: England 1914-1951* (Oxford, 2008).

³ McKibbin, R., *Democracy and Political Culture: Studies in Modern British History* (OUP, Oxford, 2019), p.181.

radio, TV) which reached much larger audiences than previously, they did not lead to increased democracy. The 'democratic' culture that emerged in the 1920s and 1930s was one that elites and intellectuals remained firmly in control of.⁴ Nevertheless, as Eve Colpus has demonstrated, such new technologies often mobilised their audience into social activism and positive citizenship in the broadest sense.⁵

An aspect of this debate concerns the rise of volunteerism and associationism that took place during the interwar period. This process has been described as both a political and social one. Helen McCarthy's study of four interwar voluntary associations (The National Federation of Women's Institutes, Rotary International, The British Legion and the LNU), shows that Britain's historical transformation into a democratic society engaged, 'a wide range of actors and agencies in multiple forms of activity, of which joining or supporting a political party was only one'. Like Laura Beers, she also suggests that,

1918 marked a turning point in so far as the achievement of universal political citizenship supplied a new impetus for the creation of mass, broad-based, voluntary associations; these subsequently became integral to the political culture of Britain's nascent mass democracy.⁶

These organizations, and others like them, played an important role in anchoring British politics ideologically in the centre-ground, 'providing important insulation' against the currents of political extremism which convulsed other European societies in this period. The non-party centralist stance of such non-government organisations acted as an essential reason why Britain avoided the excesses of fascism and communism.⁷

⁴ LeMahieu, D., *A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain between the Wars* (Oxford, reprinted 2002), p.177.

⁵ Colpus, E., 'The Week's Good Cause: Mass Culture and Cultures of Philanthropy at the Inter-war BBC', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (2011), pp.305-329.

⁶ McCarthy, H., 'Parties, Voluntary Associations and Democratic Politics in Interwar Britain', *The Historical Journal*, 50, 4 (2007), pp.891-912.

⁷ McCarthy, H., (2007), p.839.

In his contribution to a collection of essays, *The Politics of Expertise*, Matthew Hilton broadens the definition of political participation further still, arguing that it is important to,

open up the realm of the political to something far wider than that which leads directly to Whitehall or Westminster. If this is not to make the claim that politics is everywhere – even in the minutiae of our everyday lives – it is to acknowledge the existence of politics in the conscious decisions to join, protest, donate, volunteer, boycott, and withdraw.⁸

The decades of the 1920s and 30s saw an increase in popular engagement with politics – particularly in the growth of NGOs,

Beginning in the interwar period, if not before, but expanding significantly from the 1940s, professionally minded experts established new independent voluntary organizations, charities, and what would increasingly be termed NGOs, to tackle the issues at the frontier of social and political reform.⁹

McCarthy has described the general lack of knowledge of and research into the nature of LNU grassroots support as a *terra incognita* (unexplored territory).¹⁰ Although her work has done much to chart these new lands there is still much to do. This thesis gives a detailed and closer look at one such example of a grassroots organisation, and allows us to examine various aspects of the subject as in a tangible and immediate sense: who were those individuals who sat through lectures on the workings of the League of Nations on windy nights in draughty village halls, who listened with unflagging interest to sermons given by impassioned ministers, who gave up their non-working time to organise activities for school and youth groups, who practised and rehearsed for pageants or who attended rallies and marches or badgered prospective parliamentary candidates for their stance on

⁸ Hilton, M., Crowson, N. and others, *The Politics of Expertise: How NGOs Shaped Modern Britain* (OUP, Oxford, 2013), p.53.

⁹ Hilton, Crowson, and others, *The Politics of Expertise*, p.3.

¹⁰ McCarthy, H., *The British People and the League of Nations: Democracy, Citizenship and Internationalism, c.1918-45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), p.6. 'This subject [membership of the LNU] remains historical *terra incognita* despite the recent groundswell of scholarly interest in the League.'

foreign policy issues? And more importantly, what were their reasons for doing so? These are the questions that a detailed case study can shed light on and which, in turn, once added to by others, will give us a clearer understanding as to the extent of political change taking place within British society during the interwar decades.

This thesis argues that at its grass roots level, the LNU attracted a good deal of interest and participation from those attempting to redefine contemporary opinions about the role of British foreign policy - particularly amongst the articulate and educated middle classes. However, this was not necessarily indicative that it acted as a catalyst for an emerging democracy. As such, it references a wider debate between those historians who argue the LNU was a democratiser (McCarthy) and those who argue Britain's move towards greater democracy in the interwar years was kept in check by the elites and middle classes (McKibbin).¹¹

In terms of its leadership at both national and local level the Union was dominated by elites.¹² Any activism at a local level was kept in check by this leadership. Although the Union attracted support from the nonconformist churches, the established church tended to remain aloof or worse still, openly hostile. Likewise, although its membership included women's groups and schools these too tended to be drawn from the upper middle classes. Notwithstanding the Union's large membership, there was apathy from within and competition and criticism from without. Despite creating a sounding board for a questioning of government foreign policy and providing great quantities of literature and propaganda to educate the public, there is little to suggest that the Union actually changed government actions.

The thesis is in four main sections. The first (chapter 1) places the investigation within a wider historiography of the League of Nations Union. It examines how historians have viewed its

¹¹ See for example McCarthy, *The British People*, and McKibbin, *Classes and Culture*.

¹² McCarthy, *The British People*, pp.159-160. She concedes that most LNU leaders boasted aristocratic titles and that the landed gentry were often invited to accept honorary positions on the Federal Councils.

importance as a mass movement, then sets out the strengths and merits of the case study methodology and sources that underpin the thesis. The second section (chapter 2) traces the development of the CLNU over two decades, highlighting key moments – notably its hosting of the LNU's National Conference in 1932 and its local organisation of the Peace Ballot in 1934. It also introduces (chapter 3) my detailed prosopographical study of the branch membership lists. Alongside a quantitative analysis of the data, the thesis also presents detailed case studies of individual members of the CLNU.

The third section (chapters 4-7) situates the work of the LNU within the wider local social, cultural, and political context through four thematic studies of the CLNU's relations with local political parties, education and youth, women, and the churches. This approach considers why, and to what extent, these groups associated with the LNU. Whilst the thesis maintains a strong local focus, it also reflects on the national behaviours of such groups. The final section (chapter 8) identifies opposition faced by the CLNU and its implications for the branch. The thesis concludes (chapter 9) by situating the case study within the wider debate around the growth of democracy in the interwar period. It also considers some broader implications as to how a pressure group needs to act if it is to remain sustainable and effective.

Chapter 1. Historiography, Methodology, Context and Sources

Whereas the League of Nations has attracted a good deal of scholarly interest and debate, its sister organisation, the League of Nations Union, has been less studied and commented upon.¹ However, those who have written about the LNU agree on the importance of its mass membership. McCarthy argues that as one of the largest voluntary organisations of the period, ‘it became a vehicle for the development of a new dynamic in associational life following the franchise extensions of 1918 and 1928’.² Associational life as a term describing what people do and what they do with others (often on a voluntary basis) was an important feature of the LNU. The Union and its local branches provided for the first time an organised and regular forum for a wide range of the population, which included women and young people, to educate themselves, discuss, and present their ideas on British foreign policy.

However, size alone should not be a chimera for success. Kennedy argues that despite the League’s high esteem among so many of the British electorate, ‘very few politicians and almost no permanent official really believed it to be an efficacious instrument for the settlement of international problems.’³ In terms of a defence policy, whereas public opinion revolted by the horrors of war might cling to the ideals of collective security and internationalism, those who walked the corridors of power feared that these would restrict the nation’s strengths by overburdening it with commitments. Any co-operation in the defence of Britain’s allies and partners was always held as a

¹ For historiographies of the LON see: Stephen McGlinchey, ‘E.H. Carr and the Failure of the League of Nations’, *E-International Relations* (2010) <https://www.e-ir.info/2010/09/08/e-h-carr-and-the-failure-of-the-league-of-nations-a-historical-overview/> [accessed Oct 2023]. Patrick Finney, ‘The Romance of Decline: The Historiography of Appeasement and British National Identity,’ *Electronic Journal of International History* (1) (2000). Susan Pedersen, ‘Back to the League of Nations,’ *American History Review*, 112 (2007), 1091-1117.

² McCarthy, *The British People*, p.6. Gives a membership peaking to 400,000 in 1931.

³ Kennedy, P., *The Realities behind Diplomacy – Background Influences on British External Policy 1865-1930* (London: Fontana Press, 1985), pp.243-4. The author gives the efforts made by the LNU to keep foreign relations in the public domain and the 1935 Peace Ballot as examples of this ‘esteem’.

fourth priority after those of maintaining the security of the UK, protecting its trade routes, and defending its overseas territories.⁴

Established in November 1918, with its headquarters in Grosvenor Crescent, London, the League of Nations Union's stated first objective was to secure the whole-hearted acceptance of the British people for the League of Nations as 'the supreme instrument for removing injustice which may threaten the Peace of the World'.⁵ Over two decades it set out to create a consensus amongst a broad swathe of the population for an international programme of co-operation to abolish war. It carried out this role of 'educating the nation' through the production of copious amounts of literature and journals, speakers giving talks across the nation, screening of films and documentaries, promoting a close involvement with churches, schools, and universities, and by staging events such as peace pageants. It also sought to carry its message to a grassroots level through the formation of local branches and regional Councils.

The historiography of the Union (as with the League itself) has a narrative of revision and counter-revisionism which very much reflects the period in which it has been studied. Britain's failure to halt the dictators in the 1930s and the outbreak of World War Two led to a portrayal of the Union as ineffective and irrelevant, concentrating on its eventual abandonment by the wider public. Despite labelling it a mass movement, early historians of the Union paid scant attention as to how it engaged with its members and to the work of its local branches.⁶ The focus of League studies was not the Union, but the high diplomacy emanating from Geneva.⁷

The rationale for a case study has been prompted by significant changes in the focus of historians within the literature of the League of Nations Union itself. Whilst many LNU studies readily

⁴ Gibbs, N.H., *Grand Strategy*, vol. 1 (London, 1976), pp.287-8.

⁵ LNU, *The Objectives of the Union* (London, 1920).

⁶ For example, Birn, D., *The League of Nations Union 1918-1945* (Clarendon Press, 1981). Pugh, M., *Liberal Internationalism: The Interwar Movement for Peace in Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

⁷ For example, Henig, R., *The Peace that Never Was. A History of the League of Nations* (London, 2019) and *Versailles and After 1919-1933* (Haus Publishing, London, re-issued 2019).

acknowledge the importance of the role played by the local branches, few give any detailed account of their activities. One can only wonder exactly what evidence Major E.W. Newman used when he claimed in the *English Review* in 1929 that,

The LNU has a large following in the country, but a visit to one of its meetings is sufficient to show that Britain's best subjects are conspicuous by their absence. The men who fought in the war, the women who worked in the war, and the members of both sexes who are ready to respond to any call in the interests of their country and the Empire, do not feel disposed to listen to the passing of resolutions aimed at the destruction of national patriotism among the rising generation. They do not want peace at any price, and they will not support peace propaganda promoted by individuals who wish to make our country as defenceless as possible against the insidious attacks of those subversive forces with which they themselves are working in partnership.⁸

Likewise, in his published memoirs, L. S. Amery, a politician, journalist, opponent of appeasement and Colonial Secretary in Baldwin's government from 1924 to 1929, penned a similarly unflattering view of the Union and its membership,

It brought together all the theoretical idealists who believed in making war to suppress war and the extreme pacifists who were prepared to run any risk rather than contemplate the possibility of another war with all its horror.... It is difficult in these more grimy realist days to begin to understand the atmosphere of delusion which was so steadily and often unscrupulously fostered by the combination of misguided idealism, fear, and party spirit.⁹

In what was the first major full-length study of the LNU, Donald Birn presents a more positive view of its membership, particularly its grassroots,

⁸ Polson Newman, E.W., 'The League of Nations Union', *The English Review* (May, 1929), pp.579-584.

⁹ Amery, L.S., *My Political Life. Volume Three. The Unforgiving Years 1929-1940* (London, 1955), p.144.

Large and active branches were the key to the whole effort, and for most members their branch *was* the LNU. It was quite possibly the only organisation in town concerned with foreign policy, peace, and war. The branch was the logical place to work for one's views on world affairs.¹⁰

However, despite the recognition given to their role, the individual branches are largely invisible in his work. Instead, his study concentrates on the political dramas of the Union played out by key characters, such as Cecil, Murray, Noel Baker, Garnett and others at Westminster and Grosvenor Crescent.¹¹ The local branches remain anonymous or at odds with the leadership. An attempt in 1928 to introduce federal councils operating over a larger area than the existing county federations, was resisted because,

ordinary members of the LNU did not like the way things were going and wanted their say. Their mood was angry enough to make a challenge for leadership of the Union appear feasible before very long.¹²

Who exactly these 'ordinary members' were and how they might have mounted their leadership challenge is not explained.

Peter Barty's 1972 PhD thesis identifies the LNU as a pressure group but gives little attention to the rank and file of a mass support, which enabled the Union to 'demonstrate that it commanded enough support of a segment of public opinion large enough to influence elections should its wishes be ignored'. Instead, he gives more significance to those illustrious names that gave the movement its 'quality.' By using the private letters and memoirs of public figures (Cecil, Murray, and Noel Baker), he presents the Union through a *dramatis personae* reading like 'a cross between Burke's Peerage

¹⁰ Birn, D., *The League of Nations Union 1918-1945* (Clarendon Press, 1981), p.127.

¹¹ Birn's index does not include a single reference to a local LNU branch.

¹² Birn, *The League of Nations Union*, p.75.

and Who's Who.'¹³ A whole chapter is given over to the role of Cecil, who the author sees as 'the *alter ego* of the LNU. Its policies were his policies; its failures and successes were his equally.' Any relationship the Union had with its branches is dismissed with comment that the leadership had very little control over them and that 'the chain of command from branch to Region to Headquarters was fine on paper, but ineffective in practice'.¹⁴ In calling his study the 'rise and decline of a British political pressure group' it is surprising that more was not revealed about the causes of these apparent fault-lines within the Union.

Similar top-down approaches can be found across writers whose main focus is not the Union itself but whose works offer some analysis of it. In his study of liberal internationalism, Michael Pugh gives a 'brief anatomy' of the LNU discussing its composition, intellectual strength, status and above all its liberal credentials.¹⁵ He cites the LNU's own claim to be a powerful popular movement, based on a membership which peaked at over a million, 3,000 branches and youth groups, an annual expenditure of £300,000 and a monthly journal with a distribution of 94,500. However, his account focusses mostly on the leadership and its links with the established political parties. Despite claims that the movement was, in part, 'bottom up and resistant,' he avoids any further attempt to identify the membership and its work at a local branch level,

Pinning down a social movement and hearing its voices is no easy task Likewise, gauging the strength and directions of public opinion and of the influences on civil society is a hazardous undertaking, because of the fluid and abstract nature of the concepts and the difficulties of measurement.

Rather than searching out these voices, his preferred method is 'historical',

¹³ Barty, P., 'The League of Nations Between the Wars: the rise and decline of a British pressure group' (University of Kentucky, PhD thesis, 1972), p.19.

¹⁴ Barty, P., (1972), p.65.

¹⁵ Pugh, M., *Liberal Internationalism: The Interwar Movement for Peace in Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp.14-15.

that is to identify streams of opinion and discourse through the words of individuals and organisations: their public and private pronouncements, in conference minutes, literary propaganda, manifestoes and actions.¹⁶

This methodology is not unsound, but is, in Pugh's own admission, limited by the fact that most of the above comes from the elites and misses the voices of many working at the movement's grassroots within the LNU local branches.

References to the LNU can also be found in works which deal with pacificism and peace studies more generally.¹⁷ Such studies, similarly, despite acknowledging the significance of the role played by the LNU with a membership unprecedented in the peace movement in terms of both quality and quantity, offer very little in terms of identifying the lifeblood of its grassroots membership. They too present the movement as dominated by its cast of illustrious leaders whilst paying little attention to its rank and file. In his study of protest movements, James Hinton presents the notion of a Union created to harness a critical mass of public opinion as a means of putting pressure on successive governments to embrace liberal internationalism. However, he portrays the membership as willing but weak and refers to them in mostly abstract terms.¹⁸

Martin Ceadel's writings represent the first attempts to scratch below the surface of the LNU. For example, he points out that the initiative for the Peace Ballot did not come from LNU leadership but from pressure below, in the form of C.W.A. Boorman, vice-chairman of the Ilford Branch, and a subsequent trial held in Rothermere. In his analysis of the result Ceadel offers a degree of regional breakdown. His later work acknowledges that 'with 3,040 local (plus 295 junior and 1,452 corporate) branches at its 1931 peak, the LNU played a significant role in British associational life'. He also offers insights into the Union's activities that go beyond the leadership of Cecil and Murray. Such

¹⁶ Pugh, M., (2010), p.8.

¹⁷ For example Hinton, J., *Protests and Visions* (Hutchinson, 1989) and Ceadel, M., *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945* (Oxford, 1980).

¹⁸ Hinton, J. (1989), pp.75-77.

examples (albeit limited) include that when the Hampshire federation of the Union was formed in the headmaster's study at Winchester College, 'its organizing committee consisted of four knights, two colonels, a canon, and a titled woman' and that the Union 'offered women an easy introduction into an uncontentious type of political activism.' However, by themselves these insights do not lead to any substantial or sustained analysis of the membership and its role at a grassroots level.¹⁹

Richard Overy describes the LNU as a countrywide mass movement based primarily on numbers of members, branches, the distribution lists of journals and a leadership of illustrious figures. He recognises the way the leadership set about engaging with its local members through propaganda, pageants, marches, songs and summer schools and summer camps and gives examples of its activities with individual schools and its work with local branches.²⁰ Although not extensive, his examples begin to show how the LNU operated at a grassroots level. Likewise, he acknowledges both the role of the local branches in the calling for a Peace Ballot in 1934 and the growing fracture between the leadership and its wider membership that led to the eventual demise of the LNU. By acknowledging that 'for this wider public the many problems of the modern age were the bread and butter of discussion groups and societies' he begins to unpick just what it was that made this mass movement popular at the time.²¹

McCarthy's *The British People and the League of Nations* takes a radically different approach to the Union, as indicated by its subtitle, 'democracy, citizenship and internationalism.' Her research was driven by a wider interest shown in the growth of mass democracy between the wars which took a decidedly social and cultural approach to political history. The intellectual starting point for her work on the Union gave a much greater emphasis to the politics of associational life in Britain during the first era of mass suffrage.²² Despite the apparent failures of the League to prevent war, McCarthy

¹⁹ Ceadel, M., 'The First Referendum: The Peace Ballot, 1934-5', *EHR* (October, 1980) and Ceadel, M., *Semi-Detached Idealists: The British Peace Movement and International Relations, 1854-1945* (OUP, 2000).

²⁰ Overy, R., *The Morbid Age: Britain and the Crisis of Civilization 1919-1939* (Penguin, 2019).

²¹ Overy, R., (2019), pp.230-1, p.251, p.368.

²² McCarthy, *The British People*.

argues that the work of the Union should be regarded as an important and significant step towards the creation of a new enlightened patriotism and the democratisation of foreign policy. LNU leaders believed that the horrors of the First World War had stirred the British people from their previous apathy regarding the conduct of foreign affairs. Quoting Freda White of the LNU staff writing in *Headway* in 1935, such apathy was now unimaginable,

the old days when the nation was content to leave acquaintance with international problems to the Foreign Office, and to trust blindly to dim oracles pronounced by Foreign Ministers, are gone and gone for ever. The people are aware that their fate hangs on these issues, and they are determined to learn and to make up their own minds about them.²³

Whilst clearly keeping in check any over-inflated claims of the League's success, she contends, with hindsight, it is clear,

that League supporters and their post-war counterparts succeeded, in their own unspectacular way, in persuading Britain's quiet citizens to recognise foreign affairs as their own intimate concern and international government as a cause which deserved their support, and perhaps even, on occasion, to break their silence in order to say as much.²⁴

Unlike many previous studies of the LNU, much of McCarthy's research was based on local sources as well as national ones. Not only are the records of some nineteen local branches and various other collections in County Record Offices around the country listed in her bibliography, but frequent reference is made to individual branches throughout her chapters. Her account is as much alive to grassroots activities such as public meetings, pageants, youth groups, Church affiliations and work done in schools, as it is to the interplay between the Union's leadership, Westminster parties and

²³ White, F., 'Fact and Fancy,' *Headway* 17, no. 6 June 1935 p.106. Quoted in McCarthy, H., 'Democratizing British Foreign Policy: Rethinking the Peace Ballot, 1934-1935,' *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 49, no. 2 (2010), pp. 358-87.

²⁴ McCarthy, *The British People*, p. 253.

government offices. Whilst the full nature of the Union's grassroots support remains *terra incognita*, her work has done much to chart these new lands for those wishing to venture there.²⁵

Although recognising its strength in attempting to ask new questions of the LNU, McCarthy's work did encounter criticism from some quarters, particularly historians of diplomacy and high politics with one reviewer stating that,

It is certainly right for her to try to go 'beyond the Senior Combination Room or the steps of the Foreign Office' but those places remained important, and usually decisive. The League and the LNU can be understood only if both sets of questions are asked and answered.²⁶

McCarthy's response was that her work was an attempt to ask new questions and reach a new understanding of an institution that had already been studied in depth by diplomatic historians.²⁷

Furthermore, both approaches contributed in different ways to a broader and deeper understanding of the place of the League in British politics and society between the wars.

Peter Yearwood's work has in turn been criticised for failing to address the wider context of the League's impact as a popular pressure group,

Yearwood believes that one can best understand politics by focusing on the motivations and decisions of a few score highly placed politicians and civil servants and assumes that his readers will be well acquainted with the main and indeed the minor diplomatic events and personalities already. As a result, the vibrant world of pro-League popular activism and campaigning is overlooked in favour of the backroom debate or the intelligent memo.²⁸

²⁵ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.6.

²⁶ Yearwood, P., review of *The British People and the League of Nation: Democracy, Citizenship and Internationalism, c.1918-45* (review no. 1235) <https://reviews.history.ac.uk/review/1235> Date accessed: 1 May 2020.

²⁷ Yearwood, P., review (2020). McCarthy's response was added to the review and posted, 12/04/2012.

²⁸ Pedersen, S., *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 20, Issue 3 (2009), pp.424-426, <https://doi-org.ezproxyc.bham.ac.uk/10.1093/tcbh/hwp030> Date accessed: 1 May 2020.

McCarthy's *terra incognita* has begun to stir the interest of some historians, particularly those focussing on the activities of the LNU at a local level. One such work to appear is Stephen Woodbridge's article on the Richmond branch of the LNU.²⁹ His account of the launch of a local branch demonstrates points that some of the broader studies of the LNU often pass over. He identifies the role played by women in the setting up of the local branch and that these women came from a broad swathe of political opinion: the Labour Party, the Liberal Association, the British Women Citizens' Association, and the Women's Freedom League, and highlights the lead given by women councillors. He also brings attention to some of the nuanced local opposition to the LNU. Lastly, as with Cheltenham, LNU activities in Richmond were covered with a degree of interest, thoroughness and, more often than not, support by the local press. His article demonstrates how significant and useful a source of important evidence this is as to how a popular movement functioned - one often overlooked by those who have concentrated their research on government papers and the memoirs of the leadership of the LNU alone.

An alternative methodological approach is presented in Susannah Wright's investigation of the LNU junior branches in English secondary schools.³⁰ Birn and McCarthy both acknowledge the important role education played in the LNU but neither examine this factor at the level of individual schools.³¹ Wright adopts the methodology of the case study to examine the micro-context of four secondary schools (two boys' and two girls') and how with differing traditions and cultures each responded to the LNU and the challenge of liberal internationalism. Wright provides a nuanced account of the impact of local factors that varied from school to school,

²⁹ Woodbridge, S., 'Local, Global and Appealing to Women: The Launch of the League of Nations Union in Richmond', *Richmond History Journal* 39 (2018), pp.63-69.

³⁰ Wright, S., 'Creating Liberal-Internationalist World Citizens: League of Nations Union junior branches in English secondary schools, 1919-1939', *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (2020), pp.321-340.

³¹ Birn, *The League of Nations Union*, p.135 'there were two areas in which the LNU felt it was doing really well: in the church and the schools' and McCarthy, *The British People*, p.104 'if there was one place in interwar Britain where the fact that the League's existence was hard to miss, it was the classroom'.

School-based studies also suggest that local contextual factors could influence junior branches: the interests, commitments and preferences of staff members and the networks they were involved in, the ethos and traditions of schools, and the political views of parents and governors. Pupils' socio-economic background and their nationality and religion, might have influenced the culture and priorities of different schools and the ways in which they engaged with the wider LNU agenda.³²

Further case studies of this kind are needed to explore not just the role of the LNU in schools, but how the LNU operated more generally as the nation's largest popular movement during the interwar years.

In addition to examining issues of local associationism, this thesis seeks to engage in a wider discussion about the perceptions of national identity and Britain's role in the interwar years. It has been suggested by some historians that the war which left the nation traumatised and financially weakened, led to a questioning of old values and certainties and that it functioned as an agent of attitudinal change,

the 1920s and '30s saw a move away from formerly heroic and officially masculine public rhetorics of national destiny and from a dynamic and missionary view of the Victorian and Edwardian middle classes in 'Great Britain' to an Englishness at once less imperial and more inward-looking, more domestic and more private - and, in terms of pre-war standards, more 'feminine'.³³

As shown by Eve Colpus, this in turn led towards greater engagement with humanitarian issues and away from the kind of supremacist glorification of nationhood which had inspired the imperialist

³² Wright, S., (2020), p.338.

³³ Light, A., *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (Taylor & Francis Group, 1991), p.8.

endeavour in the late nineteenth century.³⁴ Agencies such as the Save the Children Fund, together with the League of Nations, operated as part of a process by which Britain became more internationalist after the First World War. The work of the League and other international and humanitarian organisations was the focus of a five-year Carnegie sponsored project that started in 2011.³⁵ Its theme was to show that out of the devastation of war came a growing desire between nations to cooperate, not just for the ending of war but for issues such as human rights, food security and the treatment of refugees. To this extent the nation's leaders showed support for the notion of the League (albeit one cast in their own image).

British statesmen thus wrote the ideals appropriate to their own liberal trading empire – free trade, repression of slavery – into the mandates plan. For, one might say, an oversight regime appealed as a means less of training ‘backward peoples’ to govern themselves than of training ‘backwards empires’ to govern like the British.³⁶

However, others have put a counter-argument that despite signs of the Empire's decline, imperialism, in the form of defence of imperial preference and of the colonies, remained the priority of the nation's foreign policy. Daniel Stephens challenged the view that the interwar years saw a retreat from Empire by reminding us that of a population of 44 million, over 26 million attended the Wembley Exhibition of 1924. As well as a tangible demonstration of the strengths of the Empire (not least the Stadium itself) it also served to indicate,

³⁴ Colpus, E., ‘*The Week's Good Cause*: Mass Culture and Cultures of Philanthropy at the Inter-war BBC’, *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 22 no. 3, (2011), pp.305-329. Demonstrates how the BBC *Good Cause* appeals contributed to reformulating popular notions of active citizenship in Interwar Britain.

³⁵ *War, Peace, and Poverty in the 20th Century* (University of Oxford Project, 2011). The project's aims stated that it was ‘to explore how the League acted as a sort of forcing ground for the construction of cultures and theories of internationalism, an underexplored aspect of the League's history, but one with resonance for today.’

³⁶ Pedersen, S., ‘Empires, States, and the League of Nations’ in *Internationalisms: A Twentieth Century History*, ed. Sluga, G. and Clavin, P. (CUP, 2016), p.118.

a determination to reconstruct imperial relationships in order to solve British problems (imagined and real) of national decline.³⁷

His argument serves as both a warning not to overjudge the strength of support for the League and its Union and not necessarily to view Britain's membership as a commitment to a new liberal internationalism. Many nations were aware of how crucial their imperial control was and how they could use the League's powers to pursue that end. Writings on the Save the Children Fund have shown how humanitarian action could remain integral to the imperial tradition,

The empire had always, they claimed, been 'no more in power than in trust to the British people', and the fund informed the British public that they would 'only be free to celebrate our greatness' if they realized the 'special responsibility' that the empire entailed. Indeed, it was argued that it was partly through the performance of humanitarian works that imperial greatness was constituted.³⁸

Whilst some in Britain saw opportunity to exploit the League for imperial purposes, others, with a lingering mood of *machtpolitik*, argued how ineffective it was without force and that this burden should not be shouldered by Britain alone. Britain's defence would depend on her navy, and it was a resource she could not risk being overstretched by League commitments. Despite public support for the League, in private Britain's governments,

expressed deep cynicism about its capacity and continued to conduct a foreign policy based on deals between the major powers.³⁹

³⁷ Stephen, D., *The Empire of Progress: West Africans, Indians, and Britons at the British Empire Exhibition 1924-25* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp.137-8.

³⁸ Baughan, E., 'Every Citizen of Empire Implored to Save the Children!' Empire, Internationalism and the Save the Children Fund in inter-war Britain', *Historical Research*, vol. 86, no. 231 (February, 2013), p.128.

³⁹ Parker, M., *One Fine Day: 29 September 1923, Britain's Empire on the Brink* (Abacus Books, London, 2023), p.96.

Within this wider debate, significant claims have been made of the League and the hopes invested in it by the peoples of various nations which invite further investigation at the micro as well as macro level. As Glenda Sluga argues,

Although the existence of these intergovernmental organizations was at least partly due to victor liberal governments' preferences for fending off social upheaval – against the background of revolution in Russia in 1917 – social historians have shown that these same organizations manifested relatively widespread political support for fixing the world.⁴⁰

It is possible, through their declarations, to recognise that 'fixing the world' may have been part of the agendas for governments and leaders of nations in joining the League. However, it is a more subtle task to assess how much popular support the League and Union commanded. Although local case studies may appear parochial in outlook, they provide an awareness of those smaller ripples which led outwards to bring about wider changes in a nation's attitude to its foreign policy. Albeit with a smaller cast of characters, the drama of the nation's self-identity and role in the world was played out at a local level. Even a social and political unit as small as a single borough provides a stage for a *dramatis personae* which included: liberal internationalists *versus* protectors of the Empire; those who believed in economic co-operation *versus* those who believed in various forms of protectionism; those willing to commit to a collective security *versus* those who wished to rely on the nation's strength alone.

The investigation of the activities and membership of a single LNU branch allows us to highlight within a local community the relative strengths of support for internationalism and imperialism. From this we can build outwards to consider how they helped shape the nation's sense of identity in the 1920s and 30s. This study has further relevance, in that these are issues that the nation still

⁴⁰ Sluga, G., Chapter in *Peacemaking and International Order after the First World War* (CUP, 2023), pp.407–414.

debates with itself, as demonstrated by the arguments over Britain's membership of the European Community and her commitment to NATO.

Methodology

In adapting it from other disciplines, historians have found the case study methodology an objective means of examining different viewpoints without pre-conceived notions.⁴¹ In the political sciences John Gerring points to the value of work done by the case study in theory building rather than theory testing. It enjoys a natural advantage in research of an exploratory nature as,

it does not have to set out to prove its stance prior to its creation and when produced, can inform on the basis of observed facts.⁴²

Likewise, in medical research, Jan Vandenbroucke argues that the case study can often recognize the unexpected and with,

detective-like quality it brings a smile of recognition, or of satisfactory understanding, to the faces of the presenter and audience. This is where discovery begins.⁴³

History's own strand of case study research has often been positioned under the name of micro-history. Amongst other things it counters the grand analysis of 'big' history by placing greater emphasis on the lived experience at the micro-level of everyday life.⁴⁴ It is an approach that owes some antecedence to the writings of Italian historian Carlo Ginzburg. Rather than viewing history as

⁴¹ Waddell, B., *Teaching Microhistory: small things, big questions and a global pandemic* (<https://manyheadedmonster.wordpress.com/2020/07/20/teaching-microhistory-small-things-big-questions-and-a-global-pandemic>, 2020). Accessed 08/05/2023.

⁴² Gerring, J., 'The Case Study: What it is and what it does', *Handbook of Political Science* (Oxford Handbooks Online, www.oxfordhandbooks.com, 2009), p.9. Accessed 10/05/2023.

⁴³ Vandenbroucke, J.P., 'In defense of case reports and case series,' *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 134 4 (2001), pp.330–4.

⁴⁴ For example, Le Roy Ladurie, E., *Montaillou* (1975), Ginzburg, C., *The Cheese and Worms* (1976), Fischer, D., *Albion's Seed* (1989), Boucher, E. *Cultivating Internationalism in Brave New World: Imperial and Democratic Nation-building in Britain Between the Wars* (2011), and Crowson, N., 'Tramps' Tales: Discovering the Life Stories of Late Victorian and Edwardian Vagrants', *English Historical Review*, CXXXV, 577 (2020).

the ‘great deeds of kings’ and passing over the contributions of others in silence, in a seminal work he asks the question, ‘Who built Thebes of the Seven Gates?’

If the sources offer us the possibility of reconstructing not only indistinct masses but also individual personalities, it would be absurd to ignore it. To extend the historical concept of ‘individual’ in the direction of the lower classes is a worthwhile objective.⁴⁵

His study of the trials of an unfortunate miller who came up against the Inquisition digs down and sheds light on the indistinct masses, so often overlooked or over-generalised by historians.

Case study methodology also sports several strengths.⁴⁶ In dealing predominantly with raw data, there is little initial need for historians to interpret and package this information or to ‘gatekeep’ it for the reader. With its focus often at grassroots level, it can appear more familiar or identifiable to the reader, connecting them with lived experiences of everyday life. Furthermore, because it does not have a pre-requirement to fit into a certain model or be theory-driven, it can achieve a more nuanced (and sometimes unexpected) understanding of the role of causation and effect as it moves back to the broader picture of the grand narrative. Lastly, by engaging with a layer of detail found within a smaller framework, a case study allows us to ask questions that simply are not possible on a broader scale. The result is an approach that has gained popularity with both historians and their readers.

The aim of this thesis is to study political engagement with foreign policy at a local and individual level. Any contention that the 1920s and 30s saw the emergence of a new level of political participation and awareness from the masses can only really be appreciated by breaking those masses down into some of their constituent parts. To an extent this process has also been aided by the advent of the ‘new political history’ with a more innovative interest in the culture of representative politics

⁴⁵ Ginzburg, C., *The Cheese and the Worms* (Baltimore, re-printed 1992), p. xiii.

⁴⁶ For further discussion of case study strengths see: *On the Case: explorations in social history*, edited by Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson (University of Toronto Press, 1998) and Gerring, J., ‘The Case Study: What it is and what it does,’ *Handbook of Political Science* (2009).

and how this related to the people at large.⁴⁷ This in turn has led to studies looking at the political development of the nation in the early twentieth century to focus more on individual NGOs.

Historians present their case studies in several ways. Jamie Perry's doctoral thesis on two post-war NGOs (Chatham House Institute and the United Nations Association) argues that these two organisations continued the democratization of foreign policy into the post-1945 era. The main perspective of his analysis is one from above, based on contemporary publications by political scientists, sociologists, international relations scholars, educational scientists, and economists. He refers to these throughout, arguing that such sources 'have made highly valuable contributions to the study of foreign policy.' Collections from either well-known political figures or leading political parties are also prominent amongst his archival sources. The result is an analysis of the process of democratization at an institutional level - based on ideas, influences and structures, and demonstrated by graphs and charts - rather than an analysis of grassroots membership and local activism.⁴⁸

Caitriona Beaumont's gender-based case study of five women's voluntary, religious, and professional groups is an approach that enables a fuller assessment of contributions to the women's movement between the years 1928 and 1964. By quarrying a rich vein of archival material from each of the five organisations, including committee minutes, correspondence, pamphlets, and material in the LSE's Women's Library, she recovers those 'voices' of voluntary women's organisations often omitted from broader narratives. This allows her to challenge the notion of any supposed 'silent period' between first and second wave feminism and to argue for a more nuanced and inclusive definition of the woman's movement, going beyond feminism alone.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Fielding, S., 'Looking for "The New Political History"', review article in *Journal of Contemporary History*, July, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2007), pp. 515-524.

⁴⁸ Perry, J., 'Chatham House, the UNA and the Politics of Foreign Policy c.1945-1975' (University of Birmingham D. Phil thesis, 2015).

⁴⁹ Beaumont, C., *Housewives and Citizens. Domesticity and the Women's Movement in England 1928-64* (Manchester, 2015). Her groups are: the Mothers' Union, the Catholic Women's League, the National Council of Women, the National Federation of Women's Institutes and the National Union of Townswomen's Guilds.

Clare Mulley's account of the Save the Children movement is based very much on a biographical case study of its founder – Eglantyne Jebb.⁵⁰ Drawing on an eclectic collection of family archives, private correspondence, personal writings, and memoirs (including Jebb's own self-confessional, *The Soul's Roadbook*), it argues that the organisation was very much determined and shaped by the role played by an extraordinary key individual,

If the facts of her story continue to touch the imagination, it is not only because of the importance of her legacy in the international Save the Children movement and the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, but also by some of the truths she illuminated about human community that underpins these.⁵¹

Catherine Foster's account of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom takes a similar approach, through the stories of not just one, but a collection of its leading figures. Her methodology provides a narrative based around oral history including both the interviewing of some fifty women to find out about experiences and impressions and by interrogating old journals, letters and articles, believing that 'the actual participants can tell their story much better than I as an observer can'.⁵²

These represent a variety of approaches as to how to construct a case study of an interwar NGO – namely archival, institutional, or biographical. Each has its own strengths and gives valuable insights into the workings and influence of important twentieth century movements.

A case study approach to the LNU avoids the abstraction of its membership into a faceless mass movement and offers a more nuanced understanding of the nature of its supporters – in terms of the hopes, aspirations and expectations of those 'ordinary members' who paid their regular

⁵⁰ Mulley, C., *The Woman who Saved the Children. A biography of Eglantyne Jebb, founder of Save the Children* (Oneworld Publishing, London, 2010). For a similar approach see also Martin, M., 'Single Women and Philanthropy: a case study of women's associational life in Bristol, 1880–1914', *Women's History Review*, 17:3 (2008), pp.395–417.

⁵¹ Mulley, C., (2010), p.334.

⁵² Foster, C., *Women for All Seasons: The Story of the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom* (University of Georgia Press, USA, 1989), pp.2–3.

subscriptions, digested copious amounts of literature, turned out to meetings often in the most challenging of conditions, and who in some cases over time turned their back on the movement.

Context

This thesis presents an original and detailed study of associational life in a single English borough. As such it relates to the wider debate addressed by Jose Harris and others around a possible definition of ‘civil society.’⁵³ The latter is a term that seldom appears in contemporary literature (for example *Headway*) or discussions about the League and Union.⁵⁴ However, as institutions they clearly identify many of the characteristics retrogressively applied by historians,

Voluntarists [such as the LNU] have performed a sixfold service for civil society: they enhanced the free exchange of ideas, recruited new groups into citizenship, cultivated the democratic personality, fuelled the two-party system, facilitated informed and therefore effective legislation, and, by raising the tone of politics, helped to ensure that the system retained contact with the disgruntled idealist, whose direct actions might otherwise have subverted democratic government’.⁵⁵

Whilst the LNU has been seen as an agent of democratisation,⁵⁶ it has also been noted that such voluntarist groups did not always drive the democratic process forward. On occasion middle class pressure groups (as the LNU mainly was) could lapse into something ‘remarkably like the network of “sinister interest” or “old corruption” that civil society was widely supposed to have discredited and displaced’.⁵⁷ Such a judgement would be far too harsh to apply to the LNU but as this thesis

⁵³ Harris, J., ed., *Civil Society in British History, Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (OUP, 2003).

⁵⁴ *Gloucester Journal*, 10 January 1931, p.9. A rare example occurs in this speech by Lord Cecil, ‘The year 1931 will be a very critical year for the League of Nations and for the whole system of organised peace of which it is the centre. Disarmament, the essential condition of tranquillity and order in civil society, has not yet been attained within the society of nations.’

⁵⁵ Harrison, B., ‘Civil Society by Accident? Paradoxes and Pluralism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries’ in Harris, *Civil Society*, p.91.

⁵⁶ McCarthy, H., ‘Whose Democracy? Histories of British Political Culture between the War’, *The Historical Journal*, 55. 1. (2012), p. 229.

⁵⁷ Harris, *Civil Society*, p.11.

demonstrates it was, both at national and local level, an institution that the social elites of the day kept a tight control over.

As yet, no detailed case studies have been written on individual branches of the LNU so it is difficult to judge how representative, or not, Cheltenham's branch might be. However, there are several factors in the borough of Cheltenham which lend it to a profitable case study of the LNU. First, was the presence of a largely supportive local press which provided detailed and continuous reporting of the activities of the local LNU branch throughout its existence. Good relations between the branch press secretary and the papers' editors meant that many of the branch's debates and talks were reported at length and provide an extensive amount of evidence for the historian to study.

As a centre of education, Cheltenham provided both a good supply of teachers and school children to swell interest and participation in LNU activities. The role of education and of the teaching profession within the LNU's history has been well documented.⁵⁸ Prosopographical research into the membership of the Cheltenham branch clearly shows the preponderance of teachers and those connected with education as being a significant grouping within it. Likewise, research into the archives of several of Cheltenham's schools (both private and state) provide ready evidence of active junior LNU branches.

Several commentators have documented Cheltenham's long association with retired army officers and those with Anglo-Indian connections, as here wryly described by English radical and journalist, W.E. Adams (1903),

It used to be said of a certain city in America that you couldn't fire a shot in any direction without hitting a colonel. Much the same joke might be made about Cheltenham. Half-pay

⁵⁸ McCarthy, *The British People*, pp.103-131.

officers abound there.... Cheltenham was associated, before and afterwards, with famous Anglo-Indians.⁵⁹

This connection remained true in the years after the First World War and in effect meant that many of the town's residents had a more than average experience and awareness of overseas affairs.⁶⁰ Whilst by no means would this group be committed supporters of the LNU, it could lead to greater levels of interest and debate as to how the nation's foreign policy should be conducted.

Religious nonconformists often provided a seedbed for LNU membership. Alongside Cheltenham's popular image of fashionable gentility, expressed through its seasons of balls, dances, races and theatres, it had more radical undercurrents.⁶¹ Despite the dominant legacy of high churchmen such as the Reverend Francis Close (Rector 1826–1856) the town was also home to a number of nonconformist groups. Baptist, Wesleyan Methodist and Unitarian congregations provided significant focus to LNU activity, not least the Unitarian church at Bayshill under the leadership of the Reverend Barbara Thomas.

Women formed a substantial part of the membership of the LNU and in terms of the population of Cheltenham there was a preponderance of women over men in the early twentieth century – in 1911 it was fifteen women to every ten men. Clearly not all of these women would have been wealthy or educated but an early census in 1851 of two of its more fashionable areas, namely Lansdown and Pittville, reveal that half of the households there were headed by women.⁶² Sue Jones' study of Cheltenham suffragists also points to the fact that in the town were 'many female heads of households, either wealthy in their own right or the widows of wealthy husbands.' Furthermore, she

⁵⁹ Adams, W.E., *Memoirs of a Social Atom* (Hutchinson, London, 1903), p.3.

⁶⁰ Bailey, E., 'Cheltenham and the Indian Connection', *Cheltenham Local History Journal* vol. 14 (1998). p.49. 'The influx of Indian service personnel to Cheltenham was not limited to the mid-nineteenth century. Long after 1900 Cheltenham was still a desirable place for many. Those who lived in Battledown [a fashionable suburb of the town] between 1913 and 1957 tended to stay for between two and ten years, though it is known that some moved to other addresses in Cheltenham.'

⁶¹ Courtenay, A.H., 'Parliamentary Representation in Cheltenham, 1832-1848' (OU MPhil Thesis, 1991).

⁶² Cited in Jones, A., *Cheltenham, a New History* (Carnegie, 2010), p.280.

suggests the interdependency of factors such as the presence of Cheltenham Ladies College ‘meant that there were also many educated women with ambitions for their pupils.’⁶³

In the period immediately before and after the First World War some of Cheltenham’s women began to play leading roles in the movement for political and social reform. Clara Winterbotham was the first woman councillor in the town and the first to hold the office of mayor (no fewer than five times between 1921 and 1948). Such women were making significant inroads into local politics and within the activities of the Cheltenham LNU branch, and exemplify the observation of a connection between the LNU and the expansion of women’s public activities in the post-suffrage decade.⁶⁴

By identifying a range of local collective factors by which the CLNU became active, we can begin to chart the broader *terra incognita* of LNU grassroots support. Furthermore, many of these factors are ones that commentators have closely associated with the growth of LNU support nationally: an educated and literate middle class; independent, leisured and public-spirited women; nonconformist congregations; senior schools (particularly girls’); and an active Liberal party.

Sources

Few discreet collections of records for LNU branches have survived intact.⁶⁵ McCarthy lists nineteen residing in Record Offices or held in Library Local Studies collections – and a few exist in personal collections of family memorabilia.⁶⁶ Cheltenham’s lack of a branch archive is by no means unique in this sense. However, it is possible to draw up an account of branch activities from a wide range of source material. Not least amongst these is the local press whose reporting of CLNU meetings often substitutes for the lack of minute books or other committee records. Indeed, an examination of some

⁶³ Jones, S., *Votes for Women, Cheltenham and the Cotswolds* (Stroud, 2018), p.26.

⁶⁴ McCarthy, *The British People*, pp.192-203.

⁶⁵ In terms of the South-West, LNU Committee minute books for Redlands and Henleaze & Westbury branches can be found at Bristol Archives. Those for Mere and Bratton can be found at Wiltshire Archives (Chippenham).

⁶⁶ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.258 bibliography. Also, Judith and Derick Merrill have compiled a list of Norwich LNU Branch papers 1933-1936 from a family archive belonging to Judith’s grandfather, Theo Scott, NLNU honorary secretary.

of those organisations whose minute books have survived (such as the Cheltenham Liberal Association), show secretaries using press cuttings (likely drafted by themselves) to create accounts and records of their meetings. This thesis makes full use of readily accessible press reports of CLNU activities.

Despite concerns about using newspapers as historical evidence – not least for issues of accuracy and balance – there remains a necessity to do so where they are the only source of material available to the local historian. Alongside this necessity there are positives in their use. They not only cover local events and stories that would go unnoticed by the national press, but they can also add superior detail and colour in their reporting. They reflect and give insight into local contemporary opinions in the form of correspondence, editorials and feature pages (not least their women's columns). Furthermore, in the case of this thesis, the full run of editions over the inter-war period allows for a systematic and longitudinal study of the CLNU to be built up.

However, associated problems in the (over)use of newspapers should not be neglected. One such being that of political bias as expressed either by the ownership or editorship of the paper. Another challenge is to determine the extent and nature of their readership – if they were reflecting and shaping the views of their local audience, who was actually reading them? Where press reports include specific names and roles it becomes possible to make these connections, not least when the CLNU is mentioned. Also in this respect, the positioning of articles on the branch and their regularity suggest a level of interest within the town. It is impossible to address these concerns completely but the information in local newspapers cannot be refused where it is the only source. However, where cross reference with other sources of material is available this too must be sought and used.

In the nineteenth century, Cheltenham papers reflected a tradition of reporting that gave a variety of political opinion. It ranged from the conservative *Cheltenham Journal* and *Cheltenham Looker-On*, through the liberal *Cheltenham Mercury*, *Cheltenham Examiner* and *Cheltenham Telegraph*, to the

more radical *Cheltenham Free Press*. Although much of the press coverage concentrated on fashionable coming and goings, there was also detailed reporting of the borough's political activities in its editorials, articles, reports, and letters.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, this variety had been somewhat reduced to the daily *Gloucestershire Echo* and the weekly *Cheltenham Chronicle*. Reports and correspondence from these papers provide the mainstay of the source material for this thesis. Although lacking some of the political debate of the previous era, they give detailed and mostly balanced accounts of borough activities. The *Gloucestershire Echo* styled itself as 'independent' in 1900 and 'unionist' by 1929. In general, the paper gave the League of Nations Union a full and sympathetic hearing. Speeches given at CLNU meetings were reported at length, often with material supplied by branch press officers.⁶⁷ These local branch officers managed its publicity efficiently and branch activities were regularly reported on.⁶⁸ However, although the local branch often thanked the *Echo* for its sympathetic coverage, the paper was not beyond criticising the Union for some of its activities or in remarking on occasion how thinly attended some of its meetings were.

The availability of this source material has been facilitated by its inclusion in the British Newspaper Online Archive. Whereas newspapers were once considered something of a cumbersome and difficult source for historians, their digitisation means that 'it is very likely that newspaper evidence will become far more prominent in historical writing'.⁶⁹ This presents its own challenges, and they need to be used with a degree of caution. As well as identifying problems in how a press archive has been assembled and may be prone to a degree of distortion, newspaper accounts themselves may not quite provide historians with the raw data they are in search of. Even so-called verbatim reporting

⁶⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 3 March 1938, p.4. Mr J.S. Wane was appointed CLNU press correspondent in 1938 and press secretary in 1940. He continued the work done by Mr J. Monro Briggs through the 1920s.

⁶⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 4 May 1934, p.6. 'The hon. secretary's report was published in the "Echo" a few days ago.'

⁶⁹ Bingham, A., 'The Digitisation of Newspaper Archives: Opportunities and Challenges for Historians,' *Modern British History*, Vol. 21 No. 2 (2010), pp.225-231.

does not provide us with evidence of its production and reception and requires some consideration of the political, social, and cultural context that the newspapers were operating in.

Another digitised archive readily accessible are various family history and genealogical websites which give a rich variety of fragments from census, birth, and death records. These allow us to recover the lives of individuals in a degree of detail. Historians have turned to methodologies associated with micro history to consider how a ‘polyphonic history’ of small accounts can reveal any common factors which shed light on the bigger picture. Whilst reminding us of all its potential pitfalls, assumptions, tricks and devices, Julia Laite uses this method to bring clarity of focus to her history of prostitution and in her recreation of the life of Lydia Harvey.⁷⁰ Used ethically and with care, small histories can be woven together to create a more coherent analysis. This thesis uses such sources in a prosopographical study to give greater identity and context to names in various CLNU membership lists.

Archive material in a non-digital format includes the CLNU’s printed annual reports, detailing committee membership, annual spending and members’ names and subscriptions paid. Another productive vein of material appears in the archives of the town’s schools. Although much of the material appears as informal descriptions of activities in school magazines, occasionally where access to school records has been allowed, a more personal testimony emerges. Where they have survived, several collections of minutes and logbooks of Cheltenham’s religious groups and political associations offer references to the LNU. A collection of sermons and writings by the Reverend Barbara Thomas (minister at Bayshill Unitarian Church and an active member of the Women’s League for Freedom) gives a personal insight to the work of the Union and the aspirations of its supporters.

⁷⁰ Laite, J., *The Disappearance of Lydia Harvey* (London: Profile Books, 2022) and ‘The Emmet’s Inch: “Small” History in a Digital Age’, *Journal of Social History*, 53, 4 (2020), 963-989. In both works the author discusses and gives examples as to how the ‘small histories’ found in genealogical records can be used to explain the past and to connect it to our present, and ourselves.

Taken together, these sources give a rounded account of the creation, development and decline of a single LNU branch. They are detailed enough to allow the contributions of significant individuals to be assessed alongside those of a range of relevant institutions and groups across the town. Furthermore, they not only demonstrate the strengths of the CLNU but they also reveal its weaknesses.

Chapter 2. A History of the Cheltenham League of Nations Union Branch: 1920-1945

‘The Greatest Crusade of all – the Crusade for World Peace’¹

This chapter analyses the development and activities of the CLNU through a series of key events.

January 10th, 1920 saw the League of Nations established with the stated purpose of avoiding war as a means of settling disputes. Instead, it would use diplomacy and provide its members with a collective security. It also set out to find international responses to problems such as: slavery and people trafficking; improving standards of health and eradicating diseases like leprosy and malaria; poverty; piracy; resettling and repatriating prisoners of war; and improving the status of women.

Whereas the US Senate refused to ratify the Treaty – meaning that America never joined the League - the British public gave it a more enthusiastic welcome.

The League of Nations Union was established in November 1918 with Lord Robert Cecil as its chair, Gilbert Murray as deputy and Edward Grey (former Liberal foreign secretary) as its president. Its origins were in the League of Nations Society (LNS) created in 1915 with the aim of reforming international relations to a more harmonious level. In November 1918, the LNS merged with the League of Free Nations Association and became the League of Nations Union (LNU).² Its declared aim was ‘to secure whole-hearted support by the British people for the League of Nations as the guardian of international rights...and the supreme instrument for removing injustices which may threaten the peace of the world’.³ As a non-partisan organisation it found a broad backing amongst Liberal and Labour supporters, some Conservatives and several journalists and intellectuals.

¹ LNU 1930 *Annual Report* (London, 1931). From a speech by HRH Prince of Wales at the Guildhall Dinner held for the League of Nations.

² League of Nations Union (LNU) is used to indicate the national body as opposed to the local Cheltenham branch (CLNU). The League of Nations is abbreviated to LON.

³ LNU *The Objects of the Union* (London, 1920).

The LNU headquarters and permanent staff resided in Grosvenor Crescent in London. Its administrative structure consisted of a General Council which met twice a year and held final responsibility for LNU policy.⁴ After 1930 Federal Councils (operating as a link to the local branches) were added to this structure. In London, the LNU's Executive Committee met every two weeks and co-ordinated campaigns, analysed branch reports and resolutions, monitored the work of the numerous specialist sub-committees (Management, Finance, Branches, Youth, Overseas, Refugees etc.) and generally acted as the central policy-making body of the LNU.⁵ Regional LNU branches had their own independent management structures. By 1930 the Union claimed a membership of almost 900,000 spread over nearly 3,000 branches. Any British citizen was allowed to become a member so long as they paid the minimum subscription of 1 shilling - designed to make as wide an appeal as possible. Junior branches were established in many secondary schools and institutions such as churches were offered corporate membership. With its aim to educate the public the Union produced many pamphlets, leaflets, flyers and publications including a monthly journal (*Headway*).⁶

The beginnings of the CLNU: 1920-21

The first LNU activity in Cheltenham was the announcement in 1919 of a meeting at the Town Hall with the intention of setting up a local branch.⁷ The Mayor presided, and H.L. Jefferson, a regional officer sent from LNU headquarters, explained the objectives of the Union. The meeting was well attended and included a good representation of local clergy and doctors. Although Sir James Agg-Gardner MP (Conservative) sent his apologies, he hoped that the idea of a local LNU would receive much sympathy.⁸

⁴ Branches could nominate between one to three representatives to the Council, depending on their size.

⁵ LSE Digital Archive: CHAT D4/30. Objects and Rules of the League of Nations Union (1919).

⁶ LNU 1931 *Annual Report* (London, 1931). *Headway*'s circulation was reported to be 100,000 in 1931.

⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 7 November 1919, p.3.

⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 November 1919, p.5.

In reviewing the progress made so far by the LNU, Jefferson explained that the country had been divided into sixteen regions, each with its own Council, with the aim of educating and informing public opinion. Already there were 12,000 members nationally, paying a modest one shilling subscription. He emphasised that the Union was to be free of the Foreign Office and non-party. All offices were open to women and the minimum age for joining was set at eighteen.⁹ The LNU also hoped to set up a junior league to work in schools – claiming that ‘just as German children had been educated for war, our children might be educated for peace.’ Each branch would be allowed to plan its own activities, and alongside lectures and meetings it was hoped that there would be a social element. Rev. Petch (vicar of St Luke’s in Cheltenham) then proposed a motion to establish a local branch, remarking that because the Union was ‘such a sane movement for carrying out a great purpose’ it was likely to receive support in Cheltenham. The motion was accepted unanimously, and the Mayor was appointed to head a provisional committee to set up a constitution with Joshua Monro Briggs as its honorary secretary.¹⁰

Early in 1920 the provisional committee organised a ‘Mass Meeting’ in the Town Hall.¹¹ The main speaker was Lord Hugh Cecil, Conservative MP for Oxford, the son of Prime Minister Lord Salisbury and the cousin of Prime Minister Arthur Balfour. His presence at this meeting is a reminder that, despite its attempts to be a movement embracing all classes, the LNU’s leadership was in effect dominated by those with hereditary titles or considerable wealth. The local establishment was evident with Sir James Agg-Gardner MP and the Rev. H.A. Wilson (Rector of Cheltenham) as the main instigators of the invitation.

⁹ Nationally, the LNU first authorised junior branches as early as 1920 but it was not until the 1930s and the lowering of the age limit that they appeared in Cheltenham’s schools.

¹⁰ As well as serving as CLNU honorary secretary (1920-34) and vice-chair (1934-36) Monro Briggs was at the centre of a number of committees in the town including: the local Board of Guardians Committee, All Saints Vestry Committee, The National Vigilance Committee, the National Saving Movements and the War Savings Committee.

¹¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 26 February 1920, p.3.

All parts of the building (including the balcony set aside for ladies) were well-filled.¹² The platform party consisted of the town's worthies - the Mayor, Agg-Gardner, several councillors, and various clergy. However, there was a clear cross-party representation within the group. A letter to the press, bemoaning that there were no Liberals on the platform, was swiftly rebutted with clear evidence of their attendance.¹³

Cecil's speech was well received. He warned of the barbarism of modern warfare with the likelihood of aerial bombardments inflicting many civilian casualties in the future. He also reflected that rather than any sense of triumphalism, many in the nation 'hated, detested and lamented the late war.' He hoped that the League of Nations could become a permanent body and work to prevent such a war ever happening again. His concluding remarks, delivered with a religious zeal, were,

Let us erect it as a safe citadel to guard humanity from the great evils of war, let us consecrate it to our religion so that it may ever be the sacred temple of abiding peace.¹⁴

Other speakers emphasised the need for the branch to be inclusive. Thomas Lyons (vice-chair of the town's Employment Committee) argued that if the LNU was to be effective it had to filter down to all classes and individuals. George Blagg (secretary of Cheltenham's Trades and Labour Council) stated that it was important the LNU was seen to eliminate party rivalry within its ranks and that it appealed across all political opinions. However, with subscriptions set at one shilling and ten shillings, membership was more likely to come from the town's middle classes and professionals.

Rev. Stone (Minister of Salem Baptist Church in Cheltenham) called for the meeting to confirm the formation of a local LNU branch and congratulated Cheltenham on possessing so many ladies and gentlemen with the courage to act in such a manner. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks

¹² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 28 February 1920, p.5.

¹³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 26 February 1920, p.3. B. Auden (CLNU treasurer) called it a narrow minded '*parish-pump letter*' and pointed out that Rev. Stone (a prominent Liberal) was present and that others had been invited.

¹⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 28 February 1920, p.5.

and a spirited request for there to be enough enthusiasm to make the Cheltenham branch one of the very best in the country.¹⁵

Although in a minority, not everyone in the town shared the meeting's sense of euphoria. A regular correspondent to the press declared the meeting a wholly academic one, with not one of the speakers making a single practical suggestion. His view was that the Germans ('the Huns') would not be prepared to take defeat lying down and were already preparing for a second war and that the nation would be better off taking Cromwell's advice to 'keep its powder dry.' He claimed that all talk of disarmament and world peace was nothing more than 'sentimental humbug.'¹⁶ Even CLNU members were casting doubt on the League's effectiveness. A motion was passed that 'the Cheltenham LNU regrets that the League possesses no powers to stop the prosecution of the war by Poland and other small states and asks the Government why the Allies could not enforce their authority there?'¹⁷ George Blagg (secretary of the Cheltenham Trades and Labour Council) went further, accusing the League of inaction over Poland's attack on Russia and asked, 'since the League of Nations has failed to act in this, its first opportunity – a real test case – has it failed for ever?'¹⁸

Despite the CLNU having a unique role in supporting the work of the League of Nations (international justice, humanitarian causes, international cooperation, and the use of diplomacy to prevent war), it faced the challenge of recruiting members in a town where there were several existing, and sometimes competing, political associations such as the Primrose League, the National Vigilance Association, the Liberty League, the Victoria League, and the Women's Freedom League. However, it helped that the LON was a topic of interest in the local press which often gave its columns over to support for the branch. In a feature on Women's Citizens' activities, Theodora Flower Mills (press secretary for the Women's Citizens' Association) recommended to all those

¹⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 28 February 1920, p.5.

¹⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 4 March 1920, p.3. Letter from Mr J Campbell.

¹⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 May 1920, p.4.

¹⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 August 1920, p.3.

wishing to really understand the League to study Miss Dorothea Jordan's current series of 'admirable articles' which could be read at the Free Library.¹⁹ Likewise the *Cheltenham Chronicle's* 'Talks for the Quiet Hour' section written by 'a layman', expressed the hope that the League's work should be found 'in drawing together in closer bonds of friendship and mutual welfare the nations of the world.'²⁰

The branch also explored other ways to raise awareness of the LNU. One was its week-long screening at the Winter Garden Picture House of the feature film *The Auction of the Souls*.²¹

Depicting the Armenian genocide by the Ottomans in 1915, with graphic scenes of impalement and crucifixion (resulting in screenings billed 'for adults only'), it was an indictment of the horrors of war and formed part of the branch's propaganda to educate people towards a more peaceful world. Some of the branch activities were less successful. A debate at the Grammar School, on the possibility of the ideals of the League of Nations ever being realised, was reported as 'not a very thrilling affair.'²²

In May 1920, the newly established CLNU met with Councillor Clara Winterbotham presiding and 202 members enrolled since the Town Hall meeting. Plans were outlined for a summer school at Kempsey (near Worcester), at which Viscount Grey would address the members, and for a programme of propaganda and educational work over the autumn and winter months. The branch hoped to invite Miss Maude Royden to give an address at the next Town Hall meeting. Miss Royden had connections with Cheltenham as a former pupil of the Ladies College.²³ Although her views on pacifism were not always in accord with the leadership of the LNU her presence in the town was most welcome.²⁴

¹⁹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 13 March 1920, p.5. Dorothea Jordan was a prominent Suffragist within the town.

²⁰ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 May 1920, p.5.

²¹ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 17 April 1920, p.20.

²² *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 3 April 1920, p.3.

²³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 May 1920, p.4.

²⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 30 September 1920, p.3.

In the early days, the branch was successful in attracting support from various quarters. In particular, it used the pages of the local press to bring it to the attention of the town's women. The *Woman's Point of View* column in *The Cheltenham Looker-on* enthusiastically announced the forthcoming meeting at which Miss Royden would give her address, claiming that 'to hear her once is to remember her always' and concluded with a challenge for Cheltonians to join the League in their thousands.²⁵ The *Cheltenham Chronicle* promoted the LNU to women's groups by suggesting that from now on all local parliamentary candidates should be questioned as to whether they supported the League or not. Claiming that the words of an MP could not always be trusted ('pious sentiments butter no parsnips') the article encouraged women's groups to scrutinise the voting records in Parliament to ensure the MPs kept their promise. Women were encouraged to form study circles, write down their views and share them.²⁶

The CLNU also found allies in various other quarters. At a meeting of the Gloucestershire Federation of Labour Parties a motion was passed that 'there should be peace between nations and that all disputes should in future be referred to the League of Nations.'²⁷ The branch was also closely associated with the town's Save the Children Fund with a few CNLU members serving on a general committee constituted to carry out its fundraising.²⁸

For the time being, doubts and distractions over the League's effectiveness were put aside by the CLNU's next mass meeting. Again, it was well attended, and all parts of the Town Hall filled.²⁹ Rev. Wilson (CLNU president) chaired, and several local dignitaries attended along with Mr Whelen from LNU headquarters. Wilson stated two objectives: to inform and deepen interest in the work of the LNU, and to win the support of those who were still 'standing apart from this great cause.' Maude Royden then spoke of the horrors of war and that it had caused a level of suffering hideously out of

²⁵ *Cheltenham Look-on*, 26 June 1920, p.21.

²⁶ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 22 January 1921, p.3.

²⁷ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 31 July 1920, p.6.

²⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 29 June 1920, p.3.

²⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 30 September 1920, p.3.

proportion to the good it effected. Arguing against those who claimed from a scientific point of view that mankind was a species predisposed to violence, she contested that the capacity to struggle could be a positive thing if harnessed through the LON, so long as the fight was waged against poverty, ignorance, disease, and war itself. Her ‘burning eloquence’ was much admired by those present.³⁰ Agg-Gardner, concluding the meeting, expressed the hope that the next generation would grow up realising that heroism and bravery were not exclusively the attributes of war.

This event generated much momentum for the branch. The next few months saw the start of a local campaign to spread knowledge and understanding of the League’s work across the county with Cheltenham acting as a hub for wider LNU activity. The CLNU called a meeting in Cirencester where enthusiastic attendees decided to start their own local branch.³¹ There followed a meeting at Brockworth at which Dr Pruen of the CLNU stated that it was the duty of every citizen to make the League a living force by joining the LNU.³² Several other village meetings were convened at which Dr Pruen, Monro Briggs and Councillor Clara Winterbotham all spoke – often accompanied by Frederick Whelen from LNU headquarters. In most cases these were held in schools with the permission of the local vicar. October saw a meeting at Stroud; November at Winchcombe (the literary and debating society), Churchdown and Combe Hill; December at Swindon Village, Shurdington and Charlton Kings; and in the following year, at Stanway, Sheepscombe and Staverton.³³ Press reports indicate they were well attended by an inquisitive and enthusiastic audience and concluded either with numbers signing up to join the movement or a resolution to form their own sub-branch.

³⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 2 October 1920, p.5.

³¹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 2 October 1920, p.3.

³² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 1 October 1920, p.4.

³³ Stroud and Winchcombe were nearby Gloucestershire towns, the rest of these locations were either neighbouring villages or parishes in the Cotswolds. Individual meetings were recorded throughout 1920 and the CLNU’s annual general meeting in 1921 summarized those carried out in the year. *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 12 March 1921, p.3.

Members of the CLNU also addressed bodies such as the North Cotswold Free Church Council, the Cheltenham Central Brotherhood and the Women Citizens' Association. These groups expressed interest in and support for the work of the League and were able to identify aims similar to the LNU's.

The CLNU worked to disseminate knowledge of the League. It passed a resolution to set up a fortnightly study group to consider the work of the League and to distribute pamphlets and flyers to a wider audience. Teachers in particular were asked to make their pupils aware of the movement as a force for future peace. The branch expressed pleasure when it was announced that J.H. Brown, a pupil from Cheltenham College, had won first prize in an international essay competition on the work of the League. Likewise, a robust exchange took place in the town council when Councillor Stewart attempted to question a Library subscription to *The Covenant* (the quarterly review of the LNU) on the grounds that no-one would read it. He was quickly put in his place by fellow councillors who pointed out that he 'would be a more enlightened citizen and a more pleasant man to meet if he read it' and that its cost of fourteen shillings was very modest compared to his own recent unauthorised spend of £2000 on a bandstand.³⁴

At its first annual meeting in March 1921, Briggs reported that the CLNU had recruited 693 members. It had given addresses at thirty-four events: three mass meetings; fifteen village meetings; ten schools and colleges; one Ruri-Decanal Conference; three Church of England Missionary Societies meetings; and two public debates. Numbers on the new committee showed no shortage of those willing to serve, and included many eminent names connected with the town's institutions: Councillors Winterbotham and Geddes, Miss Jordan, Dr Pruen, Mr Paterson, Mr Blagg, Mr Dobson,

³⁴ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 January 1921, p.6.

Rev. Keay, and other leading clergy. Acknowledging his key role in the organisation and smooth running of the branch, the meeting gave special thanks to Monro Briggs.³⁵

In these first years the CLNU was successful in raising an awareness of the work of the LNU within the local community. It secured a cross-party backing within the town's political, religious, and social groups. In a milieu that was already crowded with a number of associations it quickly found its place on the town's political map. Through its propaganda and educational work, the branch engaged townsfolk in a discussion of international affairs to a level not seen before. Although much of its influence was due to the work of key individual members, part was also due to the popularity of its message. In a town that had experienced its full share of loss,³⁶ in these immediate post-war years there was a willingness to search out alternative ways of conducting foreign policy and to avoid war as a means of settling disputes.

Consolidation 1922-1935

By 1928 CLNU membership stood at 1,643 including several corporate members: the churches of St Matthew, Christ Church, Highbury, and Bayshill Unitarian, the Bethesda and Charlton Kings Brotherhoods, Pates Grammar School for Girls, and E.J. Burrows Ltd (publishers). Many of the town's dignitaries served on its committee and when Canon Wilson stood down as president in 1926, his place was taken by the new Rector, the Reverend Sheldon. The current Mayor, Alderman Margrett, served as chair and a future Mayor, Daniel Lipson, became its vice-president in 1926.

Three key events in this period demonstrate how the branch engaged with both the local and national community: the peace pageants of 1925 to 1927; hosting the LNU's annual national council and conference in 1932; and organising the town's response to the National Declaration in 1934.

³⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 9 March 1921, p.4. Report of CLNU's first annual meeting held at Cheltenham Grammar School.

³⁶ There are a total of 1297 names on Cheltenham War Memorial (including one service woman who died during the First World War). *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 October 1921, p.5. Gives an account of its unveiling.

a. The Peace Pageants

Between 1925 and 1927 the CLNU aimed to bring its message to a wider audience by fusing together two of the town's traditions – the spectacle of the pageant with the educational and reflective role of Empire Day. Pageants had been a familiar event in the town.³⁷ In 1908 a 'grand portrayal of Gloucestershire history' (five acts from the Druids to the Georgians) was staged which successfully raised £8,057 for local charities.³⁸ Such pageantry became popular across the nation in the interwar period, not just with LNU branches, for various reasons.³⁹ In part it allowed escapist pleasures of theatrical role-play and opportunities for members to demonstrate their artistic flair. But it also evidenced the creation of 'a new field of symbolic display which both reflected and reinforced a wider shift in public understandings of nationhood in the post-war world.'⁴⁰

CLNU 'peace pageants' also drew on the more recent tradition of celebrating Empire Day. When Empire Day celebrations were first proposed in the town, there was some concern expressed as to what should be celebrated, especially as they would be aimed primarily at children. It was hoped that it should not be a celebration of the 'worst aspects of patriotism'⁴¹ and that children should be taught its full meaning – 'not just fighting battles but by its association with trade and commerce'.⁴² When the town celebrated its first Empire Day in May 1905 - bedecked with flags and patriotic splendour - some still expressed a note of caution. In addressing the youth of Cheltenham, the Mayor stated that 'he did not like the warlike spirit preferring peace and goodwill, and he hoped that all the boys and

³⁷ *Cheltenham Journal and Gloucestershire Fashionable Weekly Gazette*, 22 October 1832, p.3. A classically designed pageant paid tribute to the memory of the late Sir Walter Scott. *Cheltenham Examiner*, 5 July 1893, pp.5-6. A pageant of cyclists in Pittville Park raised funds for the Sick Children's Home and Working Boys' Home.

³⁸ *Cheltenham Examiner*, 8 July 1908, p.3.

³⁹ Thomas, Z., 'Historical Pageants, Citizenship, and the Performance of Women's History before Second-Wave Feminism', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 28, 3 (2017), pp.319–343. Argues their importance as they legitimized active female involvement in public life, and asserted a space for women's future involvement as citizens.

⁴⁰ McCarthy, H., 'The League of Nations, Public Ritual and National Identity in Britain, c.1919–56', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 70 (2010), pp.108-132.

⁴¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 29 September 1903, p.1.

⁴² *Cheltenham Examiner*, 30 September 1903, p.3.

girls present would think it at least as patriotic in doing their duties conscientiously in ordinary life as in fighting the battles of the country'.⁴³

Empire Day celebrations were concentrated on schools and over time they began to show a degree of repetition and of staff losing interest. Typically, the day started with a visit from the local vicar and the school's managers. The flag was raised in the playground and the children marched into school singing hymns where they were given an address. Celebrations often included poems, readings or music extolling the Empire.⁴⁴ In the town, such celebrations were also falling a little flat. The press remarked that there was nothing to be seen in the town except perhaps 'a very occasional flag' - a far cry from 1905.⁴⁵

By contrast, the CLNU's *Pageant of Peace* was heralded as 'a new and very appropriate feature of Cheltenham's celebrations of Armistice Day.'⁴⁶ The branch's intention was to involve as many children as possible, not just as entertainment but as a means of encouraging a new 'enlightened patriotism' in the next generation of voters and citizens. The CLNU also hoped to counterbalance the impact of such events as the recent Empire Exhibition at Wembley with its blazing nationalism, or as that held locally by the Cheltenham Junior Imperial League. The latter had made clear its hostility to the League's purpose by warning 'no amount of sentimental talk about peace was going to be of any avail about this big question of Empire.'⁴⁷

The peace pageant took place on November 11 with two hundred performers representing the League of Nations in national costume.⁴⁸ Verses and hymns reinforced the importance of Britain's role

⁴³ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 27 May 1905, p.14.

⁴⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 25 May 1925, p.5.

⁴⁵ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 30 May 1925, p.3.

⁴⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 November 1925, p.3.

⁴⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 26 May 1924, p.3.

⁴⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 November 1925, p.3.

within the League. There followed a series of addresses with the Rector and the Mayor asking all present (reported at about a thousand), to give their full support to the LNU.⁴⁹

We cannot tell exactly what impact such events had on their participants and audience, but they were a part of the League's wider educational process. Although some 130 primary school pupils formed the pageant chorus, most of the performers were from the Cheltenham Academy of Dramatic Art and taking part was a means of exercising their performance skills rather than developing notions of international citizenship or foreign policy. However, the effect of experiential learning and the visual impact of the pageant may have left its mark on some,

It seems reasonable to suggest that Britain's membership of, and obligations towards, an imagined international community became more central to understandings of national identity than at any time previously.⁵⁰

The cheering of the audience showed the event had been enjoyable. Fears that it would be seen as an affront to Armistice Day were not realised and the support given by the town's authorities indicated a level of public endorsement. It was well-received by the press carrying descriptions and photographs of the event.⁵¹

At the branch's next meeting, Monro Briggs announced membership had gone up to 1,161 with the addition of 77 new members and that corporate memberships had increased and included several of the town's churches. Whether this was influenced by the pageant or not, the committee congratulated themselves on a worthwhile effort and decided to hold another on Armistice Day the following year.

The CLNU staged three peace pageants with the last taking place on Armistice Day 1927. However, despite their favourable reception, with no further references in the press, it seems that the branch

⁴⁹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 14 November 1925, p.2.

⁵⁰ McCarthy, H., 'The League of Nations, Public Ritual and National Identity in Britain, c.1919–56', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 70 (2010), p.119.

⁵¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 November 1925, p.3.

was not able to continue with its peace pageants, either through their expense or time involved preparing them. From 1928 Armistice Day ceremonies became once more acts of remembrance around the cenotaph.

However, smaller peace pageants found their way into many schools as part of Empire Day. LNU lobbying saw schools encouraged to recognise Britain's obligations to the League and LEAs in England and Wales instructed schools 'to make the League a regular feature of Empire Day'.⁵² The practice continued through the next decade and CLNU members regularly addressed schools at their Empire Day celebrations, which allowed them to put out League propaganda to the next generation. At one Lipson, in referring to the work of the League, encouraged pupils that they could look forward to the future with confidence, and that,

the world was moving in the right direction. There was greater freedom and a general improvement in the standard of living. The peoples of the world everywhere were being put in a position to govern their own destinies.⁵³

It has been argued that during the interwar period such celebrations became part of a wider political battleground.⁵⁴ Teachers, supported by LNU literature, were able to devise activities for their pupils with an emphasis on ideals of citizenship and internationalism rather than preserving memories of past imperial glory. These smaller scale pageants and performances provide evidence of a continuing role played by the CLNU in creating a new generation of enlightened patriots.

b. Viscount Cecil and the LNU Conference 1932

In 1932 the CLNU enjoyed a degree of national prominence by hosting the LNU's annual National Council and Conference. The town had an established reputation as a conference venue,

⁵² McCarthy, H., (2010), p.118.

⁵³ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 31 May 1941, p.3.

⁵⁴ English, J., 'Empire Day in Britain, 1904-1958', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 49, 1 (2006), pp.247-276.

Cheltenham's summer season promises to be better than ever this year. It is evident from the bookings that a practically continuous succession of conferences and other big events will take place.⁵⁵

The idea of hosting the Council and Conference had been mooted in 1930. Monro Briggs was authorised by the committee to send a cordial invitation to the Council (then meeting at Blackpool) to hold its 1932 conference at Cheltenham.⁵⁶ Professor Gilbert Murray's remarks in his chairman's address that steps needed to be taken to 'brighten up proceedings' at future conferences may have swayed the Council's acceptance of this invitation.⁵⁷

It was announced in the press that over four hundred delegates were coming from all parts of the United Kingdom and that the Conference would extend over several days. Those attending included most of the LNU national leadership - Viscount Cecil, Gilbert Murray, Sir Norman Angell, Lord Dickinson, and Dr Maxwell Garnett.⁵⁸

Arrangements for the conference were made by a local committee under Monro Briggs.⁵⁹ A busy four days began with a Rotary luncheon at the Queens Hotel addressed by Professor Gilbert Murray; a civic welcome by the Mayor; a service at the parish church with an address by the town's Rector (Rev. L.G.M. Sheldon); and a town hall reception. Day two was given over to discussion sessions with the evening free for delegates to see the local flower show. Further discussion sessions took place on day three, with an official dinner in the evening. Day four was for a meeting of branch secretaries and an evening excursion to Cotswold villages.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 22 April 1932, p.5.

⁵⁶ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 18 October 1930, p.7.

⁵⁷ *Lancashire Evening Post*, 25 June 1931, p.8.

⁵⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 June 1932, p.1.

⁵⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 June 1932, p.1. 'He has given much zealous and patriotic service, and the excellent organisation he has brought to bear upon the arrangements should make conference an outstanding success.'

⁶⁰ Gloucestershire Archives: PQ7.7GS. Programme for 1932 Conference.

The conference was not without some disagreement. A proposal that Sir Austen Chamberlain should not be re-elected to the Executive Committee on account of his call for Britain to have a stronger navy, was headed off by the leadership, but with a delegate declaring that he was ‘ashamed that a British Politician should have made such a statement’. By contrast, more agreement was reached over the need to persuade the Government to use all means to prevent war in East Asia and that Japan should be made to withdraw all occupying troops from Chinese territory.

In his speech Cecil paid respect to the recent departed French leader, M. Briand (‘who loved his country, but only as part of the larger world and humanity, which he also loved’). He expressed optimism that under President Hoover, the USA would play a leading role in world disarmament. Noting a drop in annual subscriptions he warned of the need to boost membership – ‘to maintain the strength of the Union is not enough, we must increase it.’

On the second day discussions concerned the growth in armaments trade conducted by private companies and for them to be controlled more closely by governments. Professor Murray pointed out that it was grotesque that in the Great War many of the weapons aimed at British troops by the Turks were British and had been supplied by Britain. Other delegates argued that the arms lobby was significant and the trade a lucrative one, and any outright ban of it would meet considerable opposition and could lead to considerable unemployment in some areas.⁶¹ Such discussions were prescient of divisions that were increasing within the Union. For now, though, the Executive asserted that the Union was ‘an integral part of the machinery of international co-operation and ... that over and over again the Government has followed where the Union has blazed the trail by removing the obstruction of unprepared public opinion.’

⁶¹ *Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette*, 1 July 1932, p.12. ‘Concern as to the fate of the garrison and Naval towns and armaments workers when the real disarmament programme is adopted in this country was expressed by delegates attending the annual Council meeting of the League of Nations Union at Cheltenham.’

Speaking at the formal dinner on the second day, Cecil gave warmest thanks to all in Cheltenham who had done so much to make the visit of the Council to the town so pleasant and so successful. 'I think we have had a successful session here; that we have done good work, and that we have expressed once again our adherence to the principles for which the League of Nations was founded.' On behalf of the CLNU Mr Burrow proposed a toast to 'our visitors.' He hoped that the town had refuted a popular misconception that it was a place of hard-crusted old military men tottering on the verge of apoplexy whose only argument was 'Shoot them down'; but rather, that it was a town of almost feminine character, with distinction in music, good taste, and the beauty of its women.⁶²

In the aftermath, letters of appreciation appeared in the local press,

The fact that every corner of Cheltenham was made look its best in presenting beauty to all beholders does much to stimulate the very spirit of the League of Nations — service and helpfulness to others.⁶³

Major A.J.C. Freshwater, deputy secretary of the LNU Council, declared that 'those of us who were not already acquainted with Cheltenham and its amenities were more than favourably impressed.'⁶⁴

Accounts of the Conference's success and enthusiasm appeared even beyond the town. For example, a report in the local press in Halifax recounted that,

Men and women from almost every county of England had come together there to exchange views, to record their convictions, to discuss with each other the best means of preaching their gospel of Peace and goodwill among those of their fellow countrymen who were still unconverted.⁶⁵

⁶² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 1 July 1932, p.6.

⁶³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 7 July 1932, p.4. Letter from Peter Esslemon, delegate for Scotland.

⁶⁴ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 30 July 1932, p.6.

⁶⁵ *Halifax Evening Courier*, 9 July 1932, p.5.

It is less clear what lasting impact the conference had made on the town and the CLNU. Saturday editions of the press, whilst devoting four columns to the Carnival of Flowers, only gave a single column over to the conference. Although reports were generally uncritical, one suspects that banner headlines of 'World Panacea Formulated' were tinged with a hint of irony.⁶⁶ With talk of a universal language and a world police force to keep the peace, the Union was increasingly in danger of presenting itself to its critics as idealistic and lacking real solutions.

On the positive side, its hosting of the LNU Council not only brought the CLNU the appreciation of HQ - Cecil called it 'the most enjoyable gathering of its kind that he had ever attended' - but with fewer resignations and more money collected through subscriptions than ever before, it provided a fillip to its activities.⁶⁷

c. The Peace Ballot 1934

In October 1934, the CLNU called a meeting at the YMCA to discuss the town's arrangements for the peace ballot – 'a nation-wide referendum to test the temper of the people on the plain issues of peace and war'. Representatives of the churches, the political parties, tradesmen's associations, men's and women's societies and youth movements were invited. Lipson, speaking of the gravity of the question, argued that it was essential that the voice of the people 'as a whole' should be heard and asked for the co-operation of all the town's public bodies.

Arthur Dye (honorary secretary of the CLNU from 1933) explained that although the referendum had emanated from the LNU, it was now the joint effort of many powerful religious and secular bodies in the country. He stressed that it was not an attack on the Government, but rather an attempt to demonstrate that the nation was fully behind the League in its firm determination to work for peace. The ballot asked five straightforward questions. The first was for support for the League and

⁶⁶ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 2 July 1932, p.2.

⁶⁷ Cheltenham Public Library: CW/63G323.3CHE. Cheltenham LNU Branch Annual Report 1932.

the remaining four dealt with the reductions of armaments, private manufacture of arms, abolition of bombing from the air, and what steps would be taken against a nation who broke faith and attacked other nations.⁶⁸ It would be taken to every house throughout the country and all men and women over the age of 18 would be asked to vote.

In the Cheltenham area, which included Charlton Kings, Prestbury and Leckhampton, there were about 35,000 eligible to vote. Some 15,000 houses would need to be visited in the course of a week. The CLNU began the task of recruiting for volunteers to deliver and collect ballots – with each volunteer covering 30-40 houses.⁶⁹

The decision to hold the ballot on Armistice Day brought the CLNU a degree of local criticism – which in turn was countered by its members. Captain Dudbridge (Gloucester Regiment) at a British Legion meeting declared it to be an inappropriate date and in bad taste.⁷⁰ Dye's riposte (as an ex-service man), was that there were more things to Armistice Day than 'singing of *Tipperary* and *Pack Up Your Troubles*', and that 'our duty to the dead demands the utmost effort to keep faith with them by striving for peace.'⁷¹

A Mr Finch called for Britain to leave the League and urged people to vote 'no' to every question. He also declared that collective security was useless as a means of avoiding war and disarmament would leave Britain open to attack. Another letter by *Historicus* pointed out that Germany was now re-arming.⁷² However, as Mr Staddon (CLNU member) argued, an 'against' vote would mean the continuance of war as an absurd and insane method of settling international disputes.⁷³

⁶⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 November 1934, p.4.

⁶⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 24 October 1934, p.5.

⁷⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 November 1934, p.3. Dudbridge had earlier pointed out that 'it would be remembered in the future that Germany had retired from the Disarmament Conference and resigned from that fantastic futility, the League of Nations. Thank God they (the Government) had a Gloucestershire Regiment. They might want it.' (*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 21 October 1933, p.7).

⁷¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 November 1934, p.4.

⁷² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 18 March 1935, p.4.

⁷³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 December 1934, p.4.

On Friday 18 January, with 10,409 votes received Cheltenham declared an update of the latest results:⁷⁴

Questions	For	Against
Should Great Britain remain a member of the League of Nations?	9799	406
Are you in favour of an all-round reduction of armaments by international agreement?	9069	990
Are you in favour of the all-round abolition of national military and naval aircraft by international agreement?	7872	1992
Should the manufacture and sale of armaments for private profit be prohibited by international agreement?	8979	854
Do you consider that if a nation insists on attacking another the other nations should combine to compel it to stop by either:		
(a) economic and non-military measures?	8555	861
(b) or if necessary, military measures?	5551	2067

The CLNU considered that the organising of the peace ballot was an outstanding event of the year. The chair thought the result was very fine and paid tribute to Dye for his work and to the ballot collectors. The work was not without some problems though. Some collectors reported that domestic servants were not always allowed to sign the ballot. Others felt that the church had not given the help that it might.⁷⁵ However, ballots held in Cirencester, Bourton, Tewkesbury, Moreton-in-Marsh, and Evesham all returned significant majorities for the ‘for’ responses.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 18 January 1935, p.1 for Cheltenham results. National results given in Ceadel, M., ‘The First British Referendum: The Peace Ballot, 1934-5’, *English Historical Review* 95 (1980), p..828.

⁷⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 18 January 1935, p.1.

⁷⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 26 February 1935, p.3, *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 March 1935, p.1 and *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 13 April 1935, p.2.

By May nationally, votes for the peace ballot were pouring in at more than 100,000 a day. The final result announced at the Albert Hall in June was:

Questions	For	Against	Doubtful	No answer
Should Great Britain remain a member of the League of Nations?	11,166,818	357,930	10,528	104,790
Are you in favour of an all-round reduction of armaments by international agreement?	10,542,738	868,431	12,138	216,759
Are you in favour of the all-round abolition of national military and naval aircraft by international agreement?	9,600,274	1,699,989	17,063	322,740
Should the manufacture and sale of armaments for private profit be prohibited by international agreement?	10,489,145	780,350	15,157	355,414
Do you consider that if a nation insists on attacking another the other nations should combine to compel it to stop by either:				
(a) economic and non-military measures?	10,096,626	639,195	27,369	862,707
(b) or if necessary, military measures?	6,833,803	2,366,184	41,058	2,381,184

Cheltenham's voting was largely in step with that of the nation. The lower incidence of a 'for' vote for question three might be explained by the number of military families living in the town for whom

the abolition of the air fleet was a step too far. Conversely, this same group might have been more ready to support the use of force against a would-be aggressor.

Comparison of Cheltenham and National voting 'For' in Peace Ballot:

Question	Cheltenham	National
1	96%	95.9%
2	90%	90.6%
3	66%	85.2%
4	91%	90.1%
5a	91%	86.6%
5b	73%	58.7%

Despite the public response to the ballot and that the majority of votes being 'for' responses, its significance was soon called into question. With an increasingly hostile tone towards the Union, the local press pointed out,

There are close on thirty million electors in Great Britain, of whom 80 per cent cast their votes at the last general election, but less than 40 per cent took part in the Peace Ballot, so that it can scarcely be regarded as an accurate expression of the majority of the people of the country... The fact is that the questionnaire was so artfully framed as almost to preclude negative replies.... The ballot has accomplished no good purpose. Its main implication was that the Government is not so determined in the pursuit of peace as the British people, when the actual truth is that it has done all that is humanly possible in that direction and has done

so much in the way of unilateral disarmament as to imperil our national defences and thereby estrange vast numbers of its supporters.⁷⁷

For the most part, these middle years saw the CLNU functioning as an active body with members ready to engage in a debate around what constituted an ethical and effective foreign policy. The branch was particularly active in promoting its work in local schools and amongst the youth of the town.⁷⁸ However, the CLNU had a growing number of critics and detractors. These years also saw signs of internal disagreements and divisions within the Union as to what Britain's role within the LON should be.

Some members, disillusioned by the lack of progress towards disarmament or of any effective peace-keeping role for the League, were starting to question its effectiveness and purpose. Other individuals and groups - such as antivivisectionists - because of clashes in policy were drifting away from the League altogether.⁷⁹ Such divisions were further exacerbated as world affairs took centre stage. Aggressive acts from Japan, Mussolini and Hitler forced members to contemplate with brutal pragmatism how indeed peace could be maintained without some use of force.

The Final Years: 1935-1945

From 1935 Italy's invasion of Abyssinia became a pre-occupying subject within the CLNU and one that revealed divisions of thinking. Ceadel argues that it was a significant watershed for the nation as a whole, forcing more people than ever to admit that the choice 'lay between accommodation and containment.'⁸⁰ Speaking at a meeting of the neighbouring Evesham LNU branch, Dye gave three possible courses of action for the nation: rearmament and looking after our own interests,

⁷⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 28 June 1935, p.4. Editorial.

⁷⁸ 1935 saw the formation of a youth group for members between the ages of 16 and 30 years. As well as organising tennis tournaments it was given an 'illuminating and interesting' address on Russia by Mr C. Day Lewis (Chair of the Cheltenham Literary Society).

⁷⁹ *The Woman's Leader*, 6 April 1923, p.78 and *Gloucestershire Echo*, 25 November 1925, p.4.

⁸⁰ Ceadel, M., 'The Peace Movement Between the Wars: Problems of definition,' in Taylor, R. and Young N. (eds) *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester 1997), p.87.

disarmament and doing nothing, or committing to collective security. However, regarding the last of these, he felt that proposals for an international police force were too advanced for the League at this time.⁸¹ Others in the Union also felt that that the League should not be seen to overreach its role as there might be ‘danger of the LNU being regarded as international cranks’. When the branch eventually debated the motion put forward by the General Council, of setting up an international air-force, it was defeated by a ten to one vote.⁸²

The issue of imposing sanctions on Italy also caused division within the CLNU. At this stage, the LNU’s leaders were in favour of sanctions. Professor Murray argued that whilst they would not stop the war in Abyssinia, if continued, they would eventually bring Mussolini to his knees. However, local public opinion was moving in another direction.

If they really mean to carry through this suicidal policy, they are precipitating a world war for which we are unprepared, in order to interfere in the Italo-Abyssinian dispute which is no concern of ours.⁸³

The furthest the branch was prepared to go for now was to vote for a proposed loan to be raised in the hope that it would enable the Abyssinians to resist. Many within the CLNU remained unconvinced that sanctions would succeed. Lipson, taking a pragmatic line, went further still and called for sanctions to be dropped altogether,

The wisest move would be to drop them entirely. They were useful as long as they helped Abyssinian independence, but now that has gone sanctions only irritate and cause trouble even in the countries that impose them.⁸⁴

⁸¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 16 May 1935, p.5.

⁸² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 3 June 1935, p.4.

⁸³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 31 August 1935, p.4.

⁸⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 11 May 1936, p.3.

Not all branch members shared his view. A meeting called by Liberal and Labour supporters passed a motion protesting the decision of the National Government to abandon sanctions against Italy. Present at the meeting was the Rev. Barbara Thomas who argued that more, rather than less pressure, needed to be put on Mussolini,

It is becoming clearer and clearer to us that the organisation of peace has to be as efficient and productive as is the organisation of war. The majority of people in this country believed in using force to defend themselves when attacked. It was just as right and reasonable to use force in collective defence.⁸⁵

Stronger feelings were voiced by Rev. Stanley Franklin, president of the Cirencester branch of the LNU, who admitted he had considered giving up League work, as he was 'sick, sorry, and ashamed of the whole situation,' in referring to the League's failure to halt Mussolini.⁸⁶ Likewise, in announcing his retirement from his presidency of the LNU in Pershore, the vicar Canon R.H. Murray remarked that, 'one of my troubles is that belief in the League has been sadly waning, and, of course, you want a person who is in wholehearted support of the League to act as your president.'⁸⁷ These were testing times for the CLNU. Dye had to admit that 'the LNU had lost some of its popularity in the last two years' as sanctions had failed to save Abyssinia and that 'practically every country in the world was rearming and that any successes of the League had been forgotten.'⁸⁸

Under the leadership of Lipson, the prevailing direction of the branch changed and now became one of support for a policy of rearmament. At a meeting convened by the CLNU's executive, the Mayor explained,

⁸⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 6 July 1936, p.6.

⁸⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 25 July 1936, p.3.

⁸⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 November 1936, p.3.

⁸⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 23 April 1937, p.6.

One can reconcile loyalty for the League and support for rearmament on the part of this country. I don't believe that an unarmed Britain is likely to lead to world peace. Though I would welcome a reduction of armaments in all nations, I don't think that unilateral disarmament in this country is likely to further the cause.⁸⁹

Lipson's view was popular with a majority of the CLNU who favoured a policy of rearmament in the interests of collective security, and who regarded pacifism as an ideal not practical at the present time.⁹⁰

This change of direction opened the CLNU to a degree of public criticism. In addition to its usual detractors, the local press jumped in with a stinging criticism that was becoming increasingly common in the tone of its editorials,

It is easy to see now that the egregious peace ballot provided by the League of Nations Union and kindred associations, intended as a mandate for disarmament, was a piece of unadulterated folly in that it encouraged the Government to continue its flight after that will-o'-the-wisp called collective security, and inoculate the nation with the virus of pacifism.⁹¹

However, some CLNU members remained opposed to rearmament and continued to advocate for peace.⁹² Proposals were made to set up a Peace Council in the town under the chair of Cecil Day Lewis (currently in post at Cheltenham College).⁹³ Accepting that different views and opinions needed to be respected, the CLNU sent delegates to its first meeting. LNU rules debarred the branch from affiliating with the Peace Council, but in a show of support it was agreed that two members of the CLNU committee (Dye and Arkell) would serve as observers. Consequently, the CLNU - as just

⁸⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 24 November 1936, p.5 .

⁹⁰ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 28 November 1936, p.5.

⁹¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 24 November 1936, p. 4.

⁹² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 29 April 1937, p.4. In a letter to the Editor, Mr J.S. Wane argued that rearmament had done little to prevent the tragedy of Guernica and that it would be better 'to supplement re-armament by more constructive schemes for reconciliation.'

⁹³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 17 December 1936, p.1.

one of several groups - was no longer the town's sole voice in terms of guiding public opinion on foreign policy.

The debate over rearmament brought other problems for the branch. Speaking at an annual dinner for the 5th Gloucestershire Regiment, the Mayor felt the need to explain how his chairing of the CLNU and his support for the Territorial Army were not in conflict with each other,

He was not in favour of this nation weakening its armaments as compared with other nations, and realised that with the state of the world as it was to-day it was necessary for this country to bring its armaments up to strength....The Territorial and all armed forces of this country would be used in the proper way, to defend our own country and Empire from invasion and to put the force behind the law...and therefore one could support the action which the Government took, and give all possible encouragement to young men to play their part.⁹⁴

Throughout 1937 there were indications that the CLNU was losing support within the town.⁹⁵

Speaking at his adoption meeting, the town's new Conservative candidate, Lieut. Col. R. Tristram Harper openly stated that,

it was a complete fallacy to say that the League could influence the relations between major countries of the world....The remedy is for a change of mind among the people of the world, who will be determined to have no more wars and will be friends instead of having all this hate, and to carry that out you have to have a strong Britain and a strong British Empire.⁹⁶

The following year, a letter by Rev. Thomas expressing concern at the resignation of Anthony Eden as foreign secretary and the effect it would have on the League, was met with a few hostile responses. One letter in the *Gloucestershire Echo* from *Charlex* protested,

⁹⁴ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 10 April 1937, p.7.

⁹⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 16 June 1937, p.1. The annual meeting of the League's General Council reported that the Union was losing 20,000 members a year.

⁹⁶ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 17 April 1937, p.3.

Surely it is the duty of supporters of the League to ask what is wrong with it! Its present constitution has proved to be impracticable and unworkable. It has shown itself unable to secure America's adherence and has failed to retain three great Powers in times of peace.⁹⁷

Despite opposition, the local branch continued to maintain its profile in the town with an Armistice Day musical peace service and a series of lectures and discussions.⁹⁸ In a spirit of renewed optimism, at its 1938 annual meeting it declared its faith in the League. Despite the several setbacks it had faced, it announced its intention to set up a study circle in the town to make people more aware of the League's policies. The branch was able to report that subscriptions taken were greater than the previous year. There was also some encouragement in that 182 readers had borrowed LNU books from the local library.⁹⁹ With the support of visits from LNU headquarters, the town's youth group was reformed with an enthusiasm to develop its work within the town.¹⁰⁰

Addressing the branch, Lipson reassured members that although it was under a cloud, 'the League was not dead' but also warned that in future changes would need to take place in its constitution. As the threat of war loomed and with people questioning the League's lack of any effectiveness in preventing it, the CLNU tried to give emphasis instead to the League's humanitarian work.

The growing threat of war made it difficult for League supporters to be critical of Government policy, without appearing unpatriotic or disloyal. Lipson gave the lead by offering support for the Government's actions at Munich, claiming that, 'Czecho-Slovakia had benefited by the action taken. Its frontiers were now guaranteed by the Great Powers and more secure than perhaps the territory of most other countries of the world.'¹⁰¹ His views were not shared by others in the branch and in a

⁹⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 28 February 1938, p.4.

⁹⁸ Gloucestershire Archives: PQ6 4GS. LNU Flyer for Peace Activities. Music for the service included Vaughan Williams' 'Dona Nobis Pacem' sung by the Three Choirs Festival Choirs.

⁹⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 23 June 1939, p.3.

¹⁰⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 October 1938, p.6.

¹⁰¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 December 1938, p.5.

letter to the press entitled ‘disaster for the Czechs,’ the Rev. Thomas made her differences with Lipson public,

Such a reference to the present state of Czecho-Slovakia is heartless to the Czechs and misleading to the British. The *Times* has now published figures showing the extent of the losses suffered by Czecho-Slovakia as a result of the Munich Agreement. These losses are approximately 5,000,000 inhabitants (or one-third of the total population of Czecho-Slovakia) and 19,000 square miles of territory, or little less than one-third of her original area... Mr. Lipson values the ‘guarantee’ of the Great Powers very high if he believes it outweighs to Czecho-Slovakia her grievous losses, one of the worst of which is her loss of faith in the Western democracies.¹⁰²

Although Rev. Thomas remained loyal to the CLNU (encouraging members to wear their small LNU badges and use the specially printed LNU stamps) and was its delegate to the 1939 national conference, her support for peace saw her form other alliances and move closer towards the Peace Council, the Women’s International League, and the Labour party.

The outbreak of war forced others to confront decisions as to whether they could continue usefully or not with their support for the CLNU. Headquarters urged branches to keep positive, to collect subscriptions where possible, and to hold meetings where international affairs and League activities could be discussed. However, with ‘sadness of heart, as the war flags had been again unfurled’ some branches wavered. Tewkesbury was the first branch locally to take a vote of members, but for now decided to keep going.¹⁰³ By contrast those in Gloucester and Stroud ceased to function. Similar discussion took place within the CLNU, and it too decided to keep going – noting that some 420 members had paid their subscriptions after the commencement of hostilities. Instead of dwelling on

¹⁰² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 17 December 1938, p.4.

¹⁰³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 December 1939, p.3.

the past failures of the League, the branch's thoughts and discussions tried to focus on the peace that would follow the war,

Dye reported that the year had been a difficult one, and it had not been possible to carry out the usual activities. He added that the committee felt that the branch could do useful work in moulding public opinion against all forms of aggression, preventing feelings of bitterness and hatred, and in preparing for a just and lasting peace.¹⁰⁴

The branch continued to hold meetings, albeit with less frequency and with a diminished attendance.¹⁰⁵ As late as 1944 Dye claimed that the Cheltenham branch was 'still a live body'.¹⁰⁶

It continued to promote LNU awareness in schools through its use of Empire Day pageants. It sought to engage an adult audience through a 'Brains Trust' where a panel of speakers would debate topical issues of foreign policy and to which admission was free.¹⁰⁷

However, a final sad blow was delivered to the branch in 1945 with the passing of Monro Briggs who for 22 years had acted as its secretary before becoming a vice-president. His death not only marked the passing of the old order but was a reminder that many of those who had seen the formation and growth of the branch in the twenties were no longer around.¹⁰⁸

As the war reached its conclusion the League's aim was focused on the forthcoming peace. Both the CLNU and the Tewkesbury branch submitted questions to their parliamentary candidates asking how a lasting peace could be achieved and whether they thought another world organisation should be established. In reality, members were forced to acknowledge that the League had little authority left

¹⁰⁴ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 20 April 1940, p.4.

¹⁰⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 February 1941, p.3. Some 40 members attended the meeting.

¹⁰⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 July 1944, p.3.

¹⁰⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 4 December 1944, p.3.

¹⁰⁸ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 24 March 1945, p.2. 'In 1933, after 14 years as honorary secretary of the CLNU, Mr. Monro Briggs retired from that office, and in the following year was, with his wife, entertained to a complimentary dinner in appreciation of his self-sacrificing service for the cause of peace.'

to enforce any decisions. With Lipson presiding, the CLNU voted to close itself down and reform as a branch of the new United Nations Association.¹⁰⁹

It is testimony to the strength of the CLNU that many of the officers of this new branch had been members of the CLNU committee (Lipson, Treleaven, Dye, Mann, Wane, and others). At least one had been present at its inaugural meeting 26 years ago – E.W. Deacon, treasurer for the whole period of the branch's existence. The new UNA group soon established itself within the town and in 1948,

A flourishing state of affairs was reported at the annual meeting of the Cheltenham Branch of the United Nations Association, held at the Art Gallery on Tuesday evening.... The secretary was able to announce that membership had risen from 451 the previous year to 467 and enthusiasm had shown itself tremendously, especially in the past few weeks.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 6 February 1946, p.4.

¹¹⁰ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 24 April 1948, p.8.

Chapter 3. Prosopographical Survey and Membership Lists

Deploying the methodology of a prosopographical study, this chapter considers the make-up of the CLNU based around an analysis of its 1930s membership lists. By isolating factors such as gender, occupation, religious and political party allegiance, it attempts to present a detailed anatomy of a local branch.

In 1938 Prime Minister Chamberlain claimed to the nation that events in Czechoslovakia were ‘a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing’.¹ This chapter argues that as a result of CLNU activity there was a significant section of the town who were well-versed in international matters and their possible consequences.² For two decades the branch worked to good effect with those who were willing to educate themselves in matters of foreign policy. It has been suggested that the LNU became a means by which Britain’s quiet citizens could break their silence and question, challenge and seek to influence the nation’s foreign policy, concluding that its ‘remarkable’ work,

inspired a rich and participatory culture of political protests, popular education and civic ritual which took root in British society between the wars ... and touched Britain in particularly profound ways.³

By providing a detailed analysis of the membership of the CLNU this chapter examines evidence that both supports and questions this claim.

Initial analysis of the branch membership reveals it to be cross-party and cross-religious. Many of the town’s worthies served as committee members and the branch received good support from the town

¹ Neville Chamberlain, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons* vol. 339, 12th vol. of session 1937-1938 (London, HMSO, 1938), pp.361-369.

² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 17 December 1938 p.4. Barbara Thomas’s correspondence with Daniel Lipson on the Czech situation demonstrates a detailed and engaged knowledge of events. Similar discussions took place at Tewkesbury, Cirencester, and Evesham branches of the LNU.

³ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.1.

council.⁴ Meetings were held regularly and on occasion the branch could fill the town hall – particularly to hear a notable speaker.⁵ Civic rituals (including peace pageants) and education were amongst its priorities, and both helped draw in support for the League.

However, this needs to be counter-balanced with a recognition that degrees of participation from the town were partial. Support from the working class and manual trades was limited as was support from Labour party members. Any notion of ‘political protest’ rarely went beyond the questioning of parliamentary candidates on their views or the holding of public debates and discussions. Whilst there was much interest in the CLNU in the 1920s, it was not an interest that was capable of fully sustaining and growing itself into the 1930s. A membership that was already elderly when the branch was first established was not replenished with young blood. Likewise, in terms of associational life the branch often found itself competing with many other groups – be they religious, political, intellectual, or social. An increasingly volatile international situation in the 1930s caused more to question the practicality of the League’s aims and added both to a growing haemorrhage of members and an increase in its critics. When war came, the branch found itself in a position where it could no longer challenge government policy without appearing disloyal. It had to bide its time quietly with the hope that it could shape any future peace process.

Supporters of the LNU argued that despite these limitations, the absence of the LNU would have produced a less thoughtful, less articulate, and less-democratized electorate than that of the 1930s. It had support from a coalition of groups within the town that gave it credibility and a uniqueness which went beyond party politics. Its work in the schools, libraries, villages, and the large amounts of literature it made freely available, increased public awareness of matters of internationalism that was unprecedented. Significantly, although the League and the Union came to an end, many of those

⁴ Committee of the town council agreed to subscribe to *Headway* and stock LNU literature in the library as well as making council rooms available at a reduced rate for branch meetings.

⁵ Maude Royden, Gilbert Marry, Robert Cecil and Norman Angell all addressed meetings at Cheltenham.

responsible for setting up the town's LNU branch were also instrumental in forming the town's response and support for the new international peacekeeping force of the post war era - the UN.

The membership of the CLNU – charting the *Terra Incognita*

Contemporaries such as Robert Cecil fully recognized the importance of branches in enlisting local support for the LNU,

No movement on behalf of the League of Nations can be either adequate or effective which is anything short of National — i.e., a movement covering the whole of the British Isles and embracing every class of citizenship. The policy affects the whole future outlook of the nation — political, social, economic. It can only be realised by an organisation which is supported by an overwhelming mass of the people.⁶

However, to date, those writing the history of the LNU have demonstrated little more than a modest interest in this aspect. Until more research is done on the branches it will remain difficult to determine to what extent the Union reached or fell short of Cecil's aspirations. Only a detailed examination of the membership of its local branches will give a fuller understanding of the nature of grassroots support for the LNU.

Methodology

The main methodology deployed here is that of a prosopographical survey.⁷ This uses the tools of the genealogist to chart a *terra incognita* identified within the LNU - namely the DNA of its grassroots support. The prosopographical approach has much to commend it when detailed

⁶ LSE Digital Library: LNU/7/1. *League of Nations Union. The need for local branches*. Leaflet No 10, 1920.

⁷ I draw here on my survey of the CLNU membership in the 1930s [hereafter CLNU Membership Survey]. This survey uses CLNU membership lists produced as part of their published annual reports. The 1932 and 1935 reports can be found in Cheltenham Public Library: CW/63G323.3CHE and that for 1938 at Gloucestershire Archives: PQ6.4GS. In addition to these it uses the following sources: genealogical databases (available online at www.ancestry.co.uk and www.findmypast.co.uk) including the 1921 census, 1939 register, electoral registers, birth, death and marriage certificates and probate records; *Kelly's Directory for Gloucestershire 1939*; various local newspapers, *Gloucestershire Echo*, *Cheltenham Chronicle*, *Cheltenham Looker-On*, *Gloucester Citizen* (online at www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk).

individual biographies are scarce but where there is enough collective material to seek out significant connections and patterns within a group of members.⁸ In the case of the CLNU it is possible, through the use of census data, to gather such collective material on members pertaining to their age, sex, marital status, profession or occupation, their place of residence and the size of their household – including servants. Newspaper reports also make it possible to ascertain an individual's place of worship, their political allegiances, associational groupings, family connections, and recreational and social interests.

The survey focusses mainly on CLNU membership in the year 1935. Although the branch was active for over two decades, this year has been chosen for a number of reasons. The first is pragmatic, in that only a few membership lists have survived for the branch. Second, this year is representative of the membership of the CLNU nearly at its fullest. 1935 also sits usefully between the 1921 census and the 1939 register, allowing two access points to the genealogical data needed to compile such a survey. Finally, alongside the 1935 list are two other surviving lists (1932 and 1938) and by using data from all three, changes in the membership over time can be identified.

Analysis

Merely identifying who the individual members were provides an interesting but time-consuming activity of limited use. For such a study to be useful, an analysis needs to emerge from it. The collection of data is only the beginning - it then has to be sorted, organized, and applied to an existing hypothesis.⁹ Three key arguments emerge from this analysis.

⁸ See for instance Johansen, M., 'The Supposed Paradise of Pen and Ink: Self-education and Social Mobility in the London Public Library (1880-1930)', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 12 No. 1 (2019), pp.47-65 and 'Good Feelings and Brotherliness: Leisure, the Suburbs and Society in Public Libraries in London (1895-1930)', *The London Journal*, Vol.39:3 (2014), pp.249-264.

⁹ Keats-Rohan, K.S.B., *Prosopographical Approaches and Applications: A Handbook* (Occasional Publications UPR, 2007).

a. Recruitment

The LNU set out to recruit a broad-based membership that was non-partisan and drawn from across the classes, religions, and professions. Despite the wishes of the LNU leadership to recruit from a broad spectrum, there is doubt as to whether this was achieved. A common view found both in contemporary analysis and the work of historians is that its membership was, and remained, essentially middle class.¹⁰ In 1930 a poll conducted by the LNU asked readers of *Headway* whether they considered any special class of the population more or less favourable towards the League of Nations.¹¹ Despite a number of blank returns, the preponderant opinion was that the lower middle class, and more generally, the middle class, were the most favourable to the League.¹² McCarthy finds little argument with this, stating that ‘judging by the social background of local activists, this conclusion would appear to be true.’¹³ Through identifying the professions, occupations, educational status, places of residence and employment of servants of branch members, this survey suggests that CLNU membership was not representative of all classes.

b. Levels of Participation

A supposition is that LNU members were active in their support for the League and international liberalism. Those who set up the LNU did so not just to raise public support for the LON but also to create an independent body of public opinion to maintain pressure on Government in the pursuit of peace. Despite its limitations, the Union succeeded, albeit in an unspectacular way,

¹⁰ McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951* (Oxford, 2000), pp.44-50. States that in determining middle class status, ‘all the major surveys of the period employed the criterion of an income of £250 a year’. However, he qualifies this by remarking that in attempting a definition of ‘middle class’ what mattered most was occupation and the manners and social aspirations it demanded. He estimates that this group made up 21.93% of the population in 1931.

¹¹ *Headway*, November 1930, p.215. It is worth noting though, the survey gave no guidance as to how members could define class and many commented that ‘no material existed for such a generalisation’.

¹² *Headway*, November 1930, p.215. Article, ‘Public opinion and the League. How *Headway* readers estimate it.’

¹³ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.163.

in persuading Britain's quiet citizens to recognize foreign affairs as their own intimate concern and international government as a cause which deserved their support, and perhaps even, on occasion, to break their silence in order to say as much.¹⁴

The survey identifies several key individuals clearly fulfilling this role, but it also examines whether this was typical of the majority of branch members. Active membership can be identified from those who voluntarily paid higher subscriptions or made donations, held office, or stood on the committee, acted as ward collectors, or corresponded to the local press on behalf of the CLNU. However, as such indicators are limited to a relatively small percentage of the membership it raises some doubt on any broader claims made by the above hypothesis.

c. Loyalty and Cohesion

The national membership of the LNU declined as the 1930s progressed and in some areas local branches shut down altogether. It has been argued that unlike other non-party movements organized and based on gender, occupation, previous war-service or some other common attribute, the broad base approach of the LNU left it lacking 'a core social consistency.'¹⁵ Data from this survey demonstrates that where loyalties were challenged, the branch became weakened and divided. Based on a coalition of potentially rival groups (political or religious), often with pre-existing divergent agendas, division could easily re-emerge and assume more importance than a collective support for international liberalism. This became even more so in the 1930s as the purpose and effectiveness of the League became less clear to some members. Numbers show that the branch lost support as war approached. However, by comparing the 1935 list with those for 1932 and 1938 it is also possible to measure the longevity of individual members' commitment to the CLNU.

¹⁴ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.253.

¹⁵ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.247.

The Membership Lists

The 1935 membership list forms part of the branch's annual report to members and names all those who had paid a subscription for the year.¹⁶ It was presented at the annual general meeting of the branch held on 12 April.¹⁷ As was often the case with LNU's membership claims, some discrepancy existed between the notional membership figures as reported to the press and those actually on the membership list.¹⁸ For example, Mr Dye, the honorary secretary, had declared that in the aftermath of the National Ballot, with more than ten thousand people voting in favour of the League of Nations, 'it should not be difficult to increase the strength of the branch to a thousand members during 1935.' Despite this note of optimism, membership lists in the CLNU's annual reports for 1932 (861), 1935 (767) and 1938 (607) demonstrate an overall decline.¹⁹

The lists commence with life members and then corporate members. Corporate membership was offered to institutions or groups who promised to secure that every member of that group became an individual member, or in the case of churches, promised to pray for the LON, make regular opportunities to give out information concerning it and appoint representatives to act as a link between the Union and the congregation. The lists then give the names and titles of individuals (sometimes with initials) and the amount they paid. Most payments relate to the Union's three-tiered subscription structure.²⁰ In some cases they include an additional donation. Used alongside online census and electoral registers, it is possible to build up further levels of information on members.²¹

¹⁶ Copies of the 1932 and 1935 annual reports can be found in Cheltenham Public Library: CW/63G323.3CHE and that for 1938 at Gloucestershire Archives: PQ6.4GS.

¹⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 April 1935, p.3.

¹⁸ The LNU, both nationally and locally, often reported membership cumulatively rather than the number of actual members at a given time.

¹⁹ Cheltenham Public Library: CW/63G323.3CHE, 1932 and 1935 CLNU annual reports. Gloucestershire Archives: PQ6.4GS, 1938 CLNU annual report.

²⁰ An amount up to 3s 6d was considered the basic subscription and entitled members to a quarterly newssheet, those who paid between £1 and 3s 6d received a copy of *Headway* and those paying £1 or over received both *Headway* and all other LNU publications sent out for the year.

²¹ findmypast.co.uk & ancestry.co.uk

A complete survey of the membership is not possible. Some names simply do not appear on either the census or register – most likely, such individuals were not residing in Cheltenham in 1921 and had left or died by 1939. Others, lacking an initial or first name, present with too many alternatives and cannot be linked to a specific individual. Members were recruited from a wide area, and some, although residing relatively close to the town, are missed by a search on ‘Cheltenham’ and must be searched for in surrounding areas (Charlton Kings, Leckhampton and Prestbury for example). Others, residing beyond the town (Tewkesbury, Cirencester or in the Cotswolds) present even greater difficulties in being identified.

Where alternatives for individuals do exist and the given information is ambiguous there is potential for a confirmation bias - a tendency to include a likely candidate over an unlikely candidate without direct evidence. For example, rejecting a labourer or domestic servant in favour of a civil servant or teacher might be the correct decision, but if incorrect could skew the results and lead to an omission of these groups from the data. In such cases the entry has been left empty or flagged as uncertain. Finally, as will be discussed later in the chapter, the inclusion of individuals in the membership list in itself does not indicate an active or committed involvement with the LNU cause – for some, membership may have been for social, recreational or broadly educational reasons.

The 1935 membership list gives the names of 767 individuals, 11 corporate members and one life member. Some 683 (90%) of the membership could be identified with certainty, leaving 31 who could not be traced at all and a further 53 with only incomplete details available.

Initial analysis

The list reveals an elderly CLNU membership with an average age of fifty-eight. With less than 15% of the membership under the age of forty and barely 5% under thirty, the branch was recruiting few younger members. Later analysis in the chapter also shows that members were dying in the 1930s and were not being replaced by younger ones. Women outnumbered men by nearly twice the number

(65% to 35%) and there was a large membership of unmarried single women (35%). Even with population figures taken from the 1931 census giving an imbalance in the town of women over men (58% - 42%), these membership figures suggest a gendered aspect to branch membership.²²

In terms of subscriptions rates, by far the majority of members, 377 (70%), paid the basic level of subscription. Only 115 (22%) paid the middle tier, entitling them to a copy of *Headway*, and a modest 30 (6%) paid the higher rate of £1 or over. These amounts will be discussed later, but the Union expected members to read *Headway* or one of its subsidiary journals regularly, and was firm that any decision not to receive it,

should not be made apparently easy, and that the desire of the Union that every present recipient of *Headway* should willingly continue to receive and read it should be made quite clear.²³

Although copies were available in the public library, it seems that only a minority of branch members chose to have their personal copy.

Recruitment by Association

a. The Churches

In the 1930s the local press gave a good deal of coverage to church activities (funerals, church services, sermons, lists of officers, bazaars, charity work, musical evenings) and from these it is possible to identify individuals as belonging either to an Anglican parish or nonconformist church. Also listed in 1935 are 29 reverends and 5 canons – showing the clergy to be the largest group in terms of members' professions. Some of these were retired clergy but many were active within their parish and exercised a degree of influence on recruitment to the local branch. This is demonstrated

²² GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth: Cheltenham District through time -Work and Poverty Statistics - Economically Active by Sex. http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10168284/cube/CENSUS_ACTIVE_GEN Date accessed: 5th April 2022

²³ LSE: LNU/5/3. Branches Committee Minutes, May 1933.

best where a religious institution decided to become a corporate member, which consequently brought in several individual members.²⁴ Corporate membership was not a sole factor in recruitment though. Large numbers also came from religious institutions that were not corporate members - All Saints church brought in 24 subscribers, and Holy Apostles brought in 15. The absence of corporate membership did not deter members of a congregation from joining the branch.

There is little evidence in church records to reveal how or who took the decision to become a corporate member was taken. At times a clear lead was given by a minister, who themselves were already branch members. Examples include the Reverend Barry Tucker at Salem Baptist Church, the Reverend Barbara Thomas at Bayshill Unitarian Church, and Canon Webb-Peploe at Christ Church. In other cases, the initiative to join was provided by a branch member within the congregation. For example, Highbury church minutes record that the decision to become a corporate member in 1923 was proposed by branch member Mrs Gurney, widow of the church's long-serving treasurer.²⁵ Even in cases where corporate status was not sought, clerics who were prominent members of the branch, such as Reverend William Bellerby at St Paul's, provided a strong lead to their congregations to join.²⁶

The importance of such figures cannot be underestimated – these clerics provided the branch with a mouthpiece by which to address a wider (and captive) audience. At her Bayshill Church, Reverend Barbara Thomas delivered a series of sermons based around the work and purpose of the LON, making very clear the part she hoped her congregation would play in giving the League its support.²⁷ As well as providing the presence and leadership of a charismatic and sympathetic figure, the town's

²⁴ Figures for the following corporate institutions show that 21 branch members worshipped at Christ Church, 28 at Salem Baptist Church, 26 at Highbury Congregational Church and 20 at the Wesleyan Chapel.

²⁵ Gloucestershire Archives: D12407/2/1/3. Highbury Church meeting minutes, 29 November 1923.

²⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 November 1932, p.5. Reverend Bellerby was amongst several clerics at a CLNU meeting which passed the following resolution: 'This meeting believes that the existence of armaments at the present scale among the nations of the world endangers the maintenance of peace and appeals for a determined effort to secure further reduction by international agreement.'

²⁷ Harris Manchester College Archives, Oxford: Barbara Thomas papers and the League of Nations (uncatalogued).

religious groups offered support for CLNU recruitment in more practical ways. The branch's 1932 report records its thanks to Salem Church Council for allowing the branch to erect boards in front of the church. Using these to post new sets of bills and posters each month, the branch considered it 'a fruitful and effective form of Propaganda.'²⁸

A religious census of Cheltenham held in 1851 had shown that about 66% of the town attended a religious service, of which two thirds were Anglican, one third nonconformist and a very small number of Catholics.²⁹ Some eighty years later, where the religious affiliations of members can be identified, the data shows that recruitment for the CLNU came from the Church of England and nonconformist sectors in roughly equal numbers - respectively 25% and 20% of total membership. This appears to challenge the notion that the LNU's successes were 'more obvious in the chapel than in the church'.³⁰ However, when corporate membership is considered (2 Anglican and 7 nonconformist) the town's numbers were much more aligned to the national figures.³¹

An early branch meeting claimed that there was a 'real living interest' in the League of Nations in Cheltenham amongst many of the religious leaders of the town. Those in attendance included the Rector (Rev. H. A. Wilson), the Rev. F. Wynn representing the Free Churches and Father Ryan OSB the Roman Catholics, as well as Mr D. L. Lipson (Cheltenham College) of the Jewish faith.³² However, in subsequent years the CLNU demonstrated a relative lack of success in recruiting from the town's smaller religious groups – namely Catholics, Quakers and Jews.

In its early years, Roman Catholics were represented in the CLNU by Father Ryan, priest-in-charge at St Gregory's. However, the town's Catholic population was small with just one church.³³ By 1935

²⁸ Cheltenham Public Library: CW/63G323.3CHE, CLNU Annual Report for 1932.

²⁹ Jones, A., *Cheltenham, a New History* (Lancaster, 2010), p.282.

³⁰ Birn, *The League of Nations Union*, p.136.

³¹ Brierley, P., *Religion, LNU corporate membership: religious bodies*. Quoted in McCarthy, *The British People*, p.84. National figures for corporate membership are Anglican (420), nonconformist (1688), and Catholic (11).

³² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 February 1921, p.1.

³³ Munden, A., 'Church and Chapel Attendance in Cheltenham in 1882', *CLHS Journal* (2022), p.45. A religious census of 1882 recorded that of the 8086 townsfolk attending morning service, 380 worshipped at St Gregory's.

only five members on the list identified as Catholics – one of whom was Mademoiselle Murciani, a French national and a teacher at the Ladies' College. Father Coughlin, who succeeded Father Ryan at St Gregory's, did not become a member of the CLNU and it was left to his assistant, Father Simpson, to represent the church. When LNU members approached local Roman Catholic churches, they often encountered a 'wall of silence and struggled to find entry into a tight knit community'.³⁴ This seems to have been the case in Cheltenham. Father Simpson is only recorded in the press as having been present at one CLNU meeting and the focus of group activity at St Gregory's was the Women's Catholic League. The degree of criticism towards Italy's aggressive actions expressed by League members, first over Corfu and then Abyssinia, may well have alienated Catholics who supported the Pope and his 1929 Lateran Treaty with the fascists.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Cheltenham's Jewish population was already in decline to the point that it struggled to maintain its place of worship.³⁵ The presence of such a prominent figure as Daniel Lipson, chair of the branch from 1933 onwards, might have acted as a draw for others to become members. Given that the Union made efforts nationally to recruit non-Christian groups including Jews, we can only speculate as to the reasons so few found their way into the CLNU. The obvious reason is that they were so few in number within the town. However, Cheltenham Conservatives' refusal to accept Lipson as their party's official parliamentary candidate in 1937 was seen by some, at the time, as evidence of an anti-Semitic bias within the town.³⁶ For whatever reason, Lipson was the CLNU's only Jew on the 1935 list.

The same single membership was also true of the town's Quakers. In 1921 the group rejected an invitation to become a corporate member but eventually agreed to allow individuals to decide by

³⁴ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.91.

³⁵ Torode, B., *The Hebrew Community of Cheltenham and Stroud* (Cheltenham, 1989), p.52.

³⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 5 August 1939, p.4. See letter from H. E. Prettejohn (member of the Conservative Association), 'As regards the fact that Mr. Lipson is a Jew, this of course has nothing to do with the question, although I frankly admit that I personally prefer to be represented by a person of my own race. This does not mean that I detest Jews; it simply means that I do not desire to be governed by them.'

their own conscience as to whether to join the CLNU.³⁷ The 1935 list only identifies a Mr Viner as a member of the Quaker community. He had lived in the town for some 35 years and worked as an agent for the Wesleyan and General Assurance Society. Married with a son, his obituary records a profile of good work and charity, not unlike many others who joined the CLNU,

Mr F.W. Viner of 6, Osborne-terrace, Market-street, Cheltenham, who died on Friday. He had been prominently identified with the Adult School movement and was secretary of the Cripples' Aid Society.³⁸

It is possible to trace stepping stones that might have led Viner to the CLNU. In 1922 he attended an Adult School meeting at which the duties of good citizens were discussed, including the question as to whether Christians should,

support a government whose ultimate appeal is always to the armed forces it has created, or whether it will ever be possible to substitute the force of reason for brute force in any system of government.³⁹

Viner's interest in the humanitarian work of the LNU is suggested by his friendship with Mr Chandler, the inventor of a trench periscope rifle, who after the war put this training,

to the production of surgical appliances and artificial limbs, work he undertook as the result of the war, and in which he achieved so much success that he devoted himself entirely to it for the remainder of his life.⁴⁰

³⁷ Gloucestershire Archives: D1340/C4/M2. Cheltenham Society of Friends Preparative Meeting minute book, 8 October 1922.

³⁸ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 18 April 1942, p.10.

³⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 June 1922, p.1.

⁴⁰ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 17 October 1931, p.8.

Chandler and Viner worked closely together through the Cheltenham Cripples' Aid Society which organised regular 'treats' for the cripples of the town.⁴¹ Viner also represented the charity at Chandler's funeral in 1931.

Existing religious communities provided a significant source of recruitment to the CLNU, particularly in those who became corporate members. These provided the branch with a moral and spiritual backing. They also platformed individuals who could talk about and preach the movement's aims and successes, they provided meeting rooms for members to come together, and they provided the means to distribute propaganda. However, recruitment amongst some groups was not a certainty. In some congregations recruitment remained low and opposition to the League was evident.

b. Political Parties

Recruitment by specific party was a problem for the Union in that it declared itself to be a non-partisan organisation and therefore could not appeal to potential members on party grounds alone. However, given that existing party structures were already strong within the town, such networks inevitably appeared within the branch. Although these connections and patterns can be detected, a degree of caution must be in place when drawing any analysis from the data. The identification of an individual's party allegiance is problematic in that voting was secret and there were relatively few occasions when individuals declared their party support. Some 11% of CLNU members in 1935 can be identified with a political party based on the evidence of lists of those nominating candidates for parliamentary or local elections, press reports of party meetings and outings, details of party officials, fund raising activities, fetes, and attendance at funerals of party members. Of the 92 members where a clear party allegiance can be identified, 42 were Conservatives, 38 Liberals and 14 Labour.

⁴¹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 21 June 1924, p.4. Reported it to be supporting 73 children within the town through the supply of surgical boots and appliances, splints, an artificial leg, and a spinal chair and by providing training to help find future work.

Whereas all three parties often claimed to be supporting peace, this did not mean unqualified support for the LON. Indeed, in terms of their engagement with the CNLU, the local party associations often held back at official level. A Minute book for the Liberals in the 1920s and 30s show very little committee time or discussion given over to the LNU.⁴² It was left for individuals to declare their commitment to the Union rather than standing on a raft of party support. However, some difference of approach can be observed. Whereas both Liberals and Tories took positions on the branch committee, the former tended to be represented by members already holding posts within their own political association. Liberals on the CLNU committee included John Skelton, president of the Liberal Association, Miss Clara Winterbotham, the town's Liberal Mayoress, Alderman Philip Taylor, president of the Liberal Club, Ernest Yeend, honorary secretary for the Liberal Association, and Mrs M. Jordan, vice-chair of the Women's Liberal Association.

By contrast, most Conservatives on the 1935 CLNU list were not party officials but party supporters. Four represented the party in the wards, but none held office in the main association except for the eighty-four-year-old Miss Llewellyn who was divisional secretary of Cheltenham Women's Conservative and Unionist Association. None of these five Conservatives served on the CLNU committee or as branch officials. It would seem that the Liberals, at a party level, were more ready to establish a conspicuous presence in the CLNU than were the Conservatives.

The Labour Party was never a dominant political force within the town and the inclusion of just fourteen Labour supporters reflects this. Five of these members had links to the Bayshill Unitarian Church, which the Reverend Barbara Thomas had signed up as a corporate member. Reverend Thomas was a committed and active supporter of the LNU and regularly themed her sermons around its work. This is surely an example of a charismatic individual's influence at work.

⁴² Gloucestershire Archives: D15946/1. Minute Book of Cheltenham Liberal Association, contains a single reference to the LNU in March 1925.

However, relations generally between the Labour Party and the LON cooled somewhat after the League's condemnation of Russia's invasion of Poland after the war.⁴³ Despite Labour candidates pledging support for the Union at the hustings, the rift was never truly healed. In the 1930s it widened further within the party, with some members looking to other forms of internationalism.⁴⁴

A few Labour supporters were prepared to associate with the branch, as exemplified by Miss Fison, a member of the Women's International League, and Miss Clarence, an indefatigable social worker. Together with Miss Malleson they lived at Detmore House, Charlton Kings – a house that had its own association with the poet Sydney Dobell in the nineteenth century.⁴⁵ Since taking it on, the house had been the venue for annual garden parties and fetes for the Labour Party. In 1934 Detmore hosted a meeting which passed a resolution that the British Government should,

make renewed efforts to secure an international agreement of the air question which shall abolish all military aircraft within a given period and place civil aviation under international ownership or control and do its utmost to prevent the failure of the Disarmament Conference.⁴⁶

At another of its meetings the group summarised the first chapter of a book by Sir Norman Angell in which various experts wrote on the international situation, its dangers, and the remedy.⁴⁷

On three occasions Miss Clarence tried to win a seat on the Charlton Kings UDC but failed each time. When she died in 1941 her obituary reported that,

⁴³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 August 1920, p.3. Letter from George Blagg (secretary of Cheltenham's Trades and Labour Council) expressed disappointment that the League was doing too little to help Russia.

⁴⁴ McCarthy, *The British People*, pp. 65-69. 'There was less cause to celebrate, however, at grassroots level, where Labour activists and trade unionists noticeably trailed their leaders in enthusiasm [for the League].'

⁴⁵ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 6 September 1941, p.4. 'Every house has a special character, a special atmosphere of its own, and the characteristic atmosphere of Detmore is that of peace.'

⁴⁶ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 9 June 1934, p.5.

⁴⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 24 May 1934, p.3. 'Miss Clarence then summarised the first chapter, by Sir Norman Angell, of book by various experts the international situation, its dangers, and the remedy.'

She was an avowed Socialist, conversant with the policy of the Party, and believing that the establishment of Socialism would create the foundations of the better world for which she strived so hard.

In the same piece a close friend recalled that,

she would work in whatever capacity she was needed. Canvassing, knocking-up, number-taking—it was all the same to her. She was a grand worker, and the movement has lost a great stalwart.⁴⁸

There are clear suggestions here as to how the LNU appealed to the committed, engaged and practically minded Labour women of the Detmore group and as to why they found a place within the branch. In such cases, recruitment to the Union tended to be a matter of personal conscience and idealism rather than party political association.

Despite groups of members with clear affiliations to the three political parties, the branch managed to uphold its claim to be a non-partisan organisation. In part, this was made possible by the attitudes of the parties themselves, who maintained a cautious balancing act. Liberals were content to be conspicuous within the branch but not to the point that they dominated its membership.

Conservatives and Labour supporters, whilst contributing to branch membership, remained wary of too close a connection with the CLNU lest they should need to part from the movement in the future.

c. Specific Interest Groups

Some of the names on the 1935 list suggest that more casual and informal forms of association could lead to an individual supporting the CLNU. For some, the link with international liberalism was an obvious one, for others it was more tenuous, revolving round broader notions of creating a ‘better’ nation. Links with several groups whose aims were for the betterment of society can be found in the

⁴⁸ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 6 September 1941, p.8.

membership. The Rotary Club and its counterpart, the Inner Wheel, links to twelve names on the list, the YMCA to seventeen members, the Esperanto Group to four, and TocH to two. Some groups had a clear religious purpose, such as the Central Brotherhood (15 members) and the Sisterhood (9), the Zenana Mission (8) and various Friendly Societies (4). Others were linked to more political agendas, such as the Primrose League (10), the National Council of Women (6) and the Women's International League (2).⁴⁹

Links to another group of societies suggest a more intellectualised and enquiring membership. These include the Dickens Fellowship (12), the Historical Association (7), the Science Society (2), the Chess Club (5) and supporters of the Library and Museums lectures (5). Music too was a common interest for many members, be it supporting and competing in the town's annual music festival, performing, and giving recitals, playing the organ in church or bellringing.

The connection between the CLNU and the Dickens Fellowship is deserving of some consideration. Speaking in London at the tenth anniversary of its inauguration and with a world-wide membership of over 20,000, G.K. Chesterton said of the Fellowship that as well as celebrating the author and his work, it had wider aims,

to spread the love of humanity, which is the keynote of his work, and to ameliorate those existing social evils which would have appealed so much to the heart of Charles Dickens, and to take such means as may be expedient to help in every possible direction the cause of the poor and oppressed.... People were almost tumbling over Dickens if they thought about any subject whatever in modern England.... He foreshadowed the struggle of the present day, and the more one looked at modern politics and modern affairs the more one could see that the whole of Dickens's heroes and Dickens's villains were coming into conflict.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ CLNU Membership Survey – see Appendix.

⁵⁰ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 12 October 1912, p.6.

A branch of the Fellowship had met in Gloucester for the past decade but in 1912 Cheltenham established its own branch. A small group met in the drawing-room of Cheltenham Town Hall. Dr J.H. Garrett, chairing the meeting in place of the absent Mayor, said in his opening remarks that he thought the prospects for a branch in Cheltenham were excellent and that membership would not be restricted to any class or party.⁵¹ The vote to form a branch was passed unanimously and within its first year the Fellowship could boast a membership of over a hundred. Whilst the focus of the Fellowship was celebrating Dickens with talks and lectures, music recitations and re-enactments of his works, there was also a humanitarian and charitable aspect to its work in the town,

Our society is arranging to give an outing to the crippled children of Cheltenham on Saturday 14th June, and should be glad to have the assistance of your readers in obtaining the name, age, and address of any such children, so that all may be included if possible.⁵²

Such charitable work took on a more international dimension in 1917 when the Fellowship assisted in the town's Syria and Palestine relief fund.⁵³ In 1932 a tangible connection with the work of the League became apparent when, at the annual general meeting of the Fellowship, a subscription of £2 2s. to the League of Nations Union Conference in Cheltenham was questioned,

on what grounds was this granted by the committee, as it seemed a somewhat strange item for the Dickens Fellowship balance-sheet. The President (Mr H.O. Barnett) said the committee discussed the matter very carefully and came to the decision that the objects of the League of Nations would most decidedly have appealed to Charles Dickens.⁵⁴

Whether Dickens actually would have joined the Union must be a matter of speculation but what is clear is that it is possible to find individuals who were prominent in both organizations. An obituary

⁵¹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 26 October 1912, p.7.

⁵² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 23 May 1913, p.3.

⁵³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 September 1917, p.3.

⁵⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 2 April 1932, p.3.

for Mr W. Dillon Bicketts, a well-known local headmaster, pointed out that he had been the founder and past president of the Tewkesbury branch of the Dickens Fellowship and secretary of the Tewkesbury branch of the League of Nations Union.⁵⁵ Likewise, Mr H. Tempest, librarian of Bingham Library, Cirencester and former librarian and curator of the Cheltenham Public Library, Art Gallery and Museum, served for some years as honorary secretary of the Cirencester branch of the League of Nations Union, as well as being a member of the local branch of the Dickens Fellowship.⁵⁶

In Gloucester Mr Fox, a longstanding member of the Fellowship (and later president), gave a recital on his wife's birthday at which he said he was donating all the proceeds to the local branch of the LNU because he felt that the latter was a direct expression of the Dickensian spirit of fellowship and goodwill.'⁵⁷ A few years later he addressed the inaugural meeting of the newly formed Gloucester Youth Group of the League of Nations Union. He concluded his illustrated talk on Gloucester past and present with a slide of the War Memorial and urged his youthful audience to support the League of Nations Union, and 'to let the Memorial remind them of the great sacrifice of the lives of young men and make them willing workers for the cause of peace.'⁵⁸

In Cheltenham, the connection between the two groups was best illustrated by Arthur Dye. At a meeting in 1930 the Fellowship thanked Dye for his 'unremitting service' over the years. After joining the Fellowship with his wife in 1921 he soon became its honorary secretary and was elected president in 1928. Although he resigned from the committee in 1930, he would serve again as president in 1944.⁵⁹ Under Dye, as well as a busy programme of lectures, talks and performances, the Fellowship continued an active support for the town's charities,

⁵⁵ *Gloucester Citizen*, 23 January 1922, p.6.

⁵⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 25 January 1935, p.1.

⁵⁷ *Gloucester Journal*, 21 March 1931, p.23.

⁵⁸ *Gloucester Journal*, 9 February 1935, p.4.

⁵⁹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 13 December 1930, p.6. The CLNU presented Mr Dye with a gold watch and Mrs Dye a pewter hot water jug for their services.

During the year (1931) they had contributed £13 in support of the Dickens' cot at the Children's Hospital, £3 3s. for the Christmas Unemployment Relief Fund, blind people had been given a supper and entertainment, and gifts had been distributed among children in various institutions.⁶⁰

Although having stepped down from the presidency, Dye remained an active member of the Fellowship throughout the 1930s – serving as its treasurer in 1934. His interest in the author's work appears more than literary. A sense of an incipient liberal internationalism is shown in a talk he gave on the portrayal of female domestic servants in Dickens' novels. He concluded that this group was not just poorly paid and badly fed,

Since the birth of time women of all nations had willingly sacrificed their freedom and cheerfully carried out domestic duties, for the great privilege of wearing a gold band of servitude on the third finger of the left hand, but directly the same employment was paid for in gold of the realm it was treated, until comparatively recently, as an object of scorn and derision.⁶¹

Mr and Mrs Dye had a range of interests in the town. In the 1930s Mr Dye served as chair of the YMCA. Mrs Dye was a member of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and after the war took on Red Cross duties with the Cheltenham VAD, as well as being an Almoner under the Gloucestershire Care of the Blind.⁶² Dye was headmaster of Naunton Park School from 1922 to 1950, and a colleague recalled that,

During this time, the education of the older pupils was dominated by the charismatic and influential Arthur Dye. Having survived the brutality of life in the trenches, including being

⁶⁰ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 4 April 1931, p.6.

⁶¹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 10 March 1934, p.6.

⁶² *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 12 June 1943, p.2.

badly gassed, Mr Dye was passionately committed to the idea of building a better country for the coming generations to enjoy.⁶³

On the retirement of the ubiquitous Monro Briggs, Dye was appointed honorary secretary to the local CLNU branch. He held this post until 1944 when he then became chair of the newly established Cheltenham United Nations Association.

The connection between the Dickens Fellowship and the CLNU was not always an obvious one. The Fellowship could, at times, demonstrate a frothy nostalgic jingoism, which sat more readily with ideas of Empire and national patriotism than with international liberalism. At a Fellowship meeting in 1939 Mr Palmer, its president, remarked that,

At Christmas time, the spirit of Dickens was very near to them, and they could not allow any of these charities to suffer because ‘a little Austrian paperhanger had chosen to spill his paste over the map of Europe.’⁶⁴

Data from the CLNU Membership Survey reveals that there were several potential groups in the town that provided an informal or social base for recruitment into the CLNU. However, connections between groups such as the Fellowship and the CLNU were not automatic and any overlap between them was rarely a complete one. For example, those Fellowship members attracted most by the ‘Quality Street box’ appeal of a colourful range of eccentric and often humorous Victorian figures found little of interest to cause them to join the LNU. By contrast, those who regarded Dickens as a social reformer and champion of the poor, were more likely to connect with the Union in a mutual desire to create a fairer and better world. Such individuals could readily find a home in the transformative aims of the League.

⁶³ <https://www.friendsofnauntonpark.org.uk/early-days-at-naunton-park-school/> as recalled by Martin Wood, ex-Headteacher, Naunton Park School.

⁶⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 18 December 1939, p.6.

However, not all individuals were as unwavering in their support for the CLNU as Arthur Dye, and cannot be solely defined by their connection to a particular group. Their decisions and motivations could be complex. Although this study is primarily focused on membership of the CLNU, many members had a commitment to the branch that was balanced against a range of other interests. Membership of the CLNU did not always assume or imply an unflinching loyalty to the League and its aims. Loyalties could just as easily break as they could hold.

Levels of Participation

Despite claims by the CLNU that it should not be difficult to increase the strength of the branch to a thousand members during 1935, such a wish was not substantiated, and membership declined. The lists show total numbers in the branch, but with the additional use of press reports, it is possible to assess the level of engagement of its members. The most active were the branch officials and committee. In 1932 the resignation of Monro Briggs from the post of honorary secretary occasioned a reorganization of the officers. From then on, the branch operated with a president, chair, vice-chair, treasurer, a general secretary, finance secretary and membership secretary (also responsible for LNU literature). The president's post (held by the town's serving Rector) remained a largely honorific one, but the others were all active posts. Alongside these seven officers there was a committee of vice-presidents:⁶⁵

Vice-Presidents	Subscription	
Rev. W.E. Beck, MA	3s. 6d.	Principal of St Paul's Training College
Rev. W.E. Cloutman	Corporate member	Minister of Highbury Congregationalist Church
Sir Walter Preston, MP	£1.1s.0d	Cheltenham's Conservative MP between 1928-37. Industrialist and engineer.

⁶⁵ Data from CLNU Membership Survey.

Alderman Clara Winterbotham, MBE	£1.1s.0d	Mayor of Cheltenham 1921/3. Liberal. Private means
Councillor E.J. Burrow, FRGS	£1	Stood as an Independent in local elections. Publisher, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Salem Baptist Church
Alderman P.P. Taylor	10s.	Mayor in 1930 and 1932. Liberal. Insurance and housing agent
Mr P. Bolton, MA	£1	Headteacher of Dean Close School.
Mr R.R. Dobson, MA	2s. 6d.	Headteacher of Cheltenham Grammar School for Boys. Dickens Fellowship, Bethesda Chapel
Ven. Archdeacon F.W. Sears, MA	10s.	Archdeacon of Cheltenham and canon of Gloucester Cathedral
Bishop Palmer, MA, DD	Not on list	Assistant Bishop of Gloucester Diocese.

In their various ways, all were enthusiastic supporters of the Union. Clara Winterbotham was a founder member of the branch and frequently chaired or spoke at its meetings. Under Rev. Cloutman, Highbury church became a corporate member. In St Paul's Training College, Rev. Beck set up (in connection with the will of the late Andrew Carnegie) a circle for discussing international relations which maintained friendly connections with the CLNU.⁶⁶ Sir Walter Preston attended CLNU meetings and in his 1935 election delivered a 'striking' speech declaring three reasons why he supported the League.⁶⁷ Councillor Burrow lectured on the League declaring it to be,

The only real safeguard the world can show to-day, to keep in check all these divergent and often disastrous national aspirations and turning them from the road of competition and war

⁶⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 11 May 1932, p.1.

⁶⁷ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 9 November 1935, p.5.

into combination and the common brotherhood of man. So, it is up to us to study the League, support it by joining its great membership—and thus to help save the world for our children and grandchildren.⁶⁸

The two headmasters, Bolton and Dobson, both promoted the League within their respective schools - Dobson in particular, as he provided the branch with a chair and a venue for its meetings. Although less active within the branch, Archdeacon Sears and Bishop Palmer spoke out for the League at disarmament conferences held in the town. Despite his absence from the 1935 list (he was in Zurich having an eye operation) Bishop Palmer openly challenged those who sneered at the League and its work,

If a man was standing on a rock mid-ocean with only that rock between him and destruction, and he abandoned the rock, he would be a fool which I as a clergyman, could not find a name for.⁶⁹

Alderman Taylor's active contribution to the CLNU was less obvious.⁷⁰ However, his association with the branch was a positive one. As mayor and as a councillor he was regarded as a loyal and dedicated servant of the town, earning the nickname Chancellor of the Exchequer for his prudent watch over municipal expenditure.⁷¹

Such individuals were important to the success of the branch. Their strength was that they brought it kudos and inspired others to join. However, they were prominent figures in communities other than the CLNU - be that a congregation, a school, or a political party. Their activities traversed a range of interests, duties, and commitments which when balanced out could result in limiting or compromising their contribution to the branch. Two such examples are given by both headmasters

⁶⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 16 February 1927, p.5.

⁶⁹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 19 November 1932, p.6.

⁷⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 1 April 1947, p.5. His obituary makes no mention of any attachment to the CLNU.

⁷¹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 5 April 1947, p.4.

having to defend their actions to League supporters: Bolton for promoting the OTC in his school and Dobson for taking out a commission in the territorial army.

A group of members giving a practical level of support to the branch were its ward collectors:⁷²

Ward Collectors (1935)	Subscription	
Mr E. Treleaven	10s	Honorary membership secretary. Piano and organ dealer.
Miss E.M. Conder	5s 6d	Retired teacher
Miss Cossins	1s	Stenographer in Burrow's publishers
Mrs Ducat	5s	Widow of Lt Claude (Indian Army)
Miss James	1s	Unpaid Domestic Duties
Miss Gilder	1s	Not known
Miss Lewthwaite	1s	Not known
Mrs Monico	1s	Wife of drapery manager
Miss Probert	5s	Spinster
Mr J. Barret	1s	Telephonist GPO
Mr J.T. Crofts	£1	Assistant schoolmaster, retired
Mr Kestell-Cornish	1s	Secretary of the Royal Navy Scripture Readers Society
Lt-Col Home	2s 6d	Lt Col, Royal Indian Army, retired
Mr W.H. Knott	2s 6d	Hotel proprietor, retired
Mr Vernall	5s	Hotel proprietor
Mr Walcroft	4s 6d	Apartment housekeeper, retired

⁷² Data from CLNU Membership Survey.

Mrs Baxter	5s	Unpaid Domestic Duties, wife of foreman carpenter, retired
Miss Bence	5s	Home duties
Mrs Cook	10s 6d	Unpaid Domestic Duties
Mr J.B. Arkell	£1 1s 0d	Tax inspector retired

These ward collectors may not have enjoyed the status of branch officials, but the enrollment of new members and the collection of subscriptions was a crucial role. At the 1933 annual meeting it was reported that 1,000 individual subscriptions had been raised during 1932 and for this good result thanks and appreciation were due to the ward collectors. However, it was also noted that more collectors were required in all wards.⁷³

LNU Headquarters relied on contributions from the branches to finance the work of the League and regularly gave out encouragement and directives to increase the membership. Ward collectors also played a significant role in providing the branch with a more personalized sense of association. CLNU meetings were mostly held monthly but attendance was thin. Since its establishment, complaints had been raised that branch meetings were dull. There was a realisation that new ways needed to be found to make them more enjoyable. The introduction of music and community singing brought some change, but it was not a lasting one and attendances at monthly meetings remained low – often at the mercy of inclement weather. This was also a problem recognized by the LNU at a national level and in *Headway*, reporting back on a series of interviews he conducted with the public, James Brown wrote,

I asked some young workers in a Westminster garage if they attended LNU meetings. No, they did not like meetings. Meetings never did any good, anyway. If I had the choice between

⁷³ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 April 1933, p.4.

seeing Eddie Cantor or going to a dance and listening to somebody droning [on] about peace, what would I do? ⁷⁴

Brown's article advocated that the Union should seek to promote itself through 'the adoption of new techniques in publicity, based on the experience of our advertisers and psychologists, and not on the successes of pre-war days'. ⁷⁵

However, there seems little evidence of this being taken up by the town's branch. LNU films were shown at the local cinema and could bring in new members but were only occasional. Eminent speakers were invited in (including those who came when the town hosted the General Council in 1932), and for three years running in the late 1920s peace pageants were staged; but beyond this, little direct and regular interaction was offered to the members. Socializing events such as bazaars, clothing sales, fetes, whist drives, sports and excursions – often found amongst the town's charitable, political and church groups – were missing from the branch's activities. Consequently, the importance of the role played by the ward collectors with their many personal interactions with members was credited as 'maintaining the strength of the branch and carrying out membership campaigns as advocated by headquarters.' ⁷⁶

Many of the ward collectors were women, of whom a substantial number were spinsters. Whilst often referred to as a lost generation and victims of an enforced 'imaginary widowhood,' Katherine Holden argues that many were able to enjoy opportunities to pursue new forms of work and lifestyles. Their position enabled a sense of female solidarity and collective action,

Organizations that were not based around professional affiliations were particularly important for working-class and lower-middle-class single women, who have rarely been seen as

⁷⁴ John Brown was a graduate of Ruskin College and active Trade Unionist who was commissioned to write a series of articles for *Headway* on how the LNU could make itself more popular. Eddie Cantor was an American comedian, actor, dancer, singer, songwriter, film producer, screenwriter, and author. He was familiar to audiences through Broadway, radio, movie, and early television appearances.

⁷⁵ Brown, J., 'The Workers and the Union', *Headway* (April 1930), pp.70-71.

⁷⁶ 1935 Annual Report. See also *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 April 1933, p.4, and *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 April 1934, p.3.

instigators of collective political action and for whom spinsterhood has not generally signified freedom or independence.⁷⁷

One such spinster was Phyllis May Cossins, a 35-year-old stenographer and typist with Burrow Ltd., a prestigious publisher in the town whose owner was a leading member of the CLNU.⁷⁸ Phyllis was an only child who lived with her elderly parents in a modest house until 1930 when her father (a draper's assistant) died, and her mother was admitted to a local mental hospital. Phyllis left the family house and moved in with her elderly neighbour, Edith Fletcher. In 1946, in a slightly bizarre turn of events, Edith married Mr Williamson - a Coventry pharmacist - only to die suddenly the same year. Phyllis then married the recently widowed Mr Williamson, fourteen years her senior.

How or why, Phyllis came to join the CLNU remains uncertain. It could well have been encouraged by her employer.⁷⁹ Her only other recorded activity outside work was an association with the local Scout movement for whom she acted as assistant badge secretary.⁸⁰ However, as did Miss Gilder and Miss Probert, Phyllis worshipped at All Saints church and her recruitment into the branch may have been in part due to the presence there of Joshua Monro Briggs and his wife. Phyllis' work for the branch deserves recognition. Not only did it provide her with the opportunity to associate with an international cause, but as Holden argues, it gave her a means of neutralizing any perceived negative connotations with her spinster status.

The list of ward collectors also reflects a degree of social diversity. Whereas Phyllis' subscription of 1s denotes a modest income, Miss Probert's 5s and a prestigious address in The Avenue in Charlton Kings suggest a higher level of wealth. Francis Elsie Probert was the daughter of a solicitor's clerk and in 1935, never having worked due to looking after her widowed mother, lived with her brother, a

⁷⁷ Holden, K., 'Imaginary Widows: Spinsters, Marriage, and the 'Lost Generation' in Britain after the Great War', *Journal of Family History*, Vol. 30 No. 4 (October, 2005), pp.388-409.

⁷⁸ Data from CLNU Membership Survey.

⁷⁹ Two more of Burrow's employees appear on the 1935 list – Miss Narramore and Miss Carter.

⁸⁰ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 28 October 1933, p.7.

retired school master. Francis had served as a Red Cross volunteer in World War One and was a prominent supporter of the town's Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Her status within the CLNU is testified in that along with other of its officers she represented the branch at the King's funeral in 1936.⁸¹

Also, amongst the ward collectors, and conforming to a traditional perceived image of Cheltenham's wealthy residents, was Lt-Col John Elton Home, the son of a colonel in the Royal Engineers. In 1891 he was living in the town's fashionable Suffolk Square with his parents, three sisters, two brothers and three servants. John was educated as a dayboy at Cheltenham College before he went on to Sandhurst. From there he joined the army, receiving his commission in 1907 and obtained the rank of captain in the British Indian Army. John was wounded in 1916 serving in Mesopotamia and returned to Cheltenham soon afterwards.⁸² His wartime experiences may have led him to join the CLNU. It is not clear exactly when he joined the branch, but his name appears in the 1932, 1935 and 1938 memberships lists, paying a subscription of 2s 6d.

John served as a ward collector in 1932, a task he carried out for a few years. A possible clue as to why he was attracted to the role might be found in his taking part in a veterans' walking race in 1933. Seven men, all over fifty years of age, tackled a four-and-a-half mile steeply ascending course from the Queen's Hotel in the middle of town to the Air Balloon Inn on Crickley Hill, with a large crowd cheering them on their way.⁸³ After times were adjusted with an age handicap, the fifty-four-year-old John was fifth. The man who finished with him was Ernest Zebedee, another long-standing CLNU member. Perhaps for such a sprightly gentleman the sociable business of walking around his ward, visiting members in their homes, and making friendships had a strong appeal.

⁸¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 28 January 1936, p.6.

⁸² ancestry.co.uk. 1891 Census, 1939 Register and various Military Records.

⁸³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 30 March 1933, p.6.

As a whole, this group of ward collectors is a reminder that associations and connections within the branch were not solely based around support for a cause – membership had its social aspect as well. It cannot be assumed that all those who joined the branch did so with the intent of making a deep commitment to the cause of international liberalism. Consequently, levels of active participation varied between members.

In addition to its officers and collectors there were a few other members who made a prominent level of contribution to the branch. Miss Dorothea Jordan and Annie Briggs, wife of Monro Briggs, were amongst these. The former was an ardent publicist and speaker for the branch who did much to promote its aims and literature particularly amongst the village sub-branches.⁸⁴ The latter was someone acknowledged for giving ‘much support to her husband for his work in the town generally and the CLNU in particular.’⁸⁵

McKibbin has identified a ‘formal associationism’ existing within many interwar organizations, with the middle classes in particular showing a propensity to join clubs but that for many,

membership was passive with people only attending if there were a good speaker or for an opportunity for friendship.⁸⁶

Such a view would seem to fit with the general profile of the CLNU. Whilst there were individuals and families who were dedicated and loyal supporters of the League who gave much time to promoting its aims and work, they were a minority of the membership. The number of members who can be clearly recognised as playing an active role within the branch was around 70 – just under 10% of the total.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 23 March 1923, p.4.

⁸⁵ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 25 November 1939, p.4.

⁸⁶ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, p.87.

⁸⁷ CLNU Membership Survey.

The 1935 list contains many hidden or silent members. Their lack of any obvious activity in support of the branch, and the fact that a substantial percentage were paying the basic subscription of one shilling, might even suggest a degree of apathy. Whilst recognizing that in organizations there will only be a minority of activists with many other members present simply to inform, educate, or entertain themselves, it does counterbalance claims made by the Union about the size of its membership and its ability to speak for the nation. It also means that for many branch members their participation in the CLNU could be a fragile or temporary one.

Retention of Members

1935 was something of a turning point for the LNU. The level of popularity it achieved through the National Ballot was quickly superseded by the League's failure to get its members to impose effective sanctions on Italy and the period between November 1934 and June 1935 had ramifications for the Union,

The LNU could still rely on its power base in the churches, schools, women's organizations, youth movements, and the Liberal and Labour parties. However, given its close identification with the League of Nations, the democratization project was almost bound to lose direction and support following the failure of collective security during the Abyssinian affair.⁸⁸

Birn, too, identifies the failure of its sanctions policy to halt Mussolini as causing 'widespread growing disillusionment' with the League.⁸⁹

Alarming for the Union, concerns for the League's future were even expressed by those who were amongst its supporters. Speaking at a luncheon given in his honour in London, David Lloyd George used the occasion to declare that,

⁸⁸ McCarthy, H., 'Democratizing British Foreign Policy: Rethinking the Peace Ballot, 1934-1935', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (CUP, April 2010), pp.358-387.

⁸⁹ Birn, *The League of Nations Union*, p.167.

Every nation in the world is rearming. The League of Nations has been completely let down. That is what four years of National Government has meant —the League of Nations is in the ditch.⁹⁰

Concerns and criticisms of the Union were also expressed locally, much of it provoked by the Peace Ballot of 1934. Captain Dudbridge, speaking at an annual reunion of ex-servicemen arranged by the Stroud branch of the British Legion, claimed that,

In this country there is a League of Nations Union which is composed of many thousands of high-minded people of all political casts and of all calibres of intelligence. They have chosen Armistice time to send round a questionnaire with reference to the war. This I consider to be in the most bad taste and will only react upon them.⁹¹

Further criticism of the LNU was expressed in a letter to the press from a Mr A.C. Rolt,

The Union has, I notice, lately been presuming to arrogate to itself the right to assure HM Government of the support of public opinion for this or that unworkable or somewhat out-of-date policy. It considers the Government of the country should under all circumstances be tied down to it in dealing with all League of Nations affairs. As a member of the public, I very strongly object to this action of The Union. The result of the so-called peace ballot has obviously given The Union an inflated opinion of its own importance or, in plain English, a somewhat swollen head.⁹²

Data from the 1935 branch membership, together with that from 1932 and 1938, reveals the extent of a growing detachment and drift away from the Union in these years.⁹³ Any loss of members was a worry for the local branches. Understandably, their public statements tried to put a positive gloss on

⁹⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 August 1935, p.1. Report on speech at National Trade Union Club in London.

⁹¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 November 1934, p.3. Speech by its chair, Captain Leonard Dudbridge, MC.

⁹² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 20 August 1935, p.4.

⁹³ CLNU Membership Survey.

things. In 1935 Evesham reported that although there was a fall in its membership, 32 new members had been recruited during the year to replace those who had left, leaving a shortfall of only two members. At its annual meeting for 1934 the CLNU announced that despite it being a difficult year it was gratifying to note the loyalty of its members. Although they had lost numbers through deaths, removals to other towns, and resignations, 57 new members were enrolled during the year and 34 more recruited since the year closed.⁹⁴ A year later Arthur Dye announced that with a membership of over 800 (50 enrolled since November) the branch's quota to the Union was £70, which he was glad to say, had been paid.⁹⁵

However, actual figures from the membership lists give a less optimistic picture. With several names from the 1935 list not appearing on the 1939 Register, it is clear that many members were dying or leaving the town. In some cases names appeared on the 1935 membership list when a death had already occurred earlier in the year.⁹⁶ The table below shows the steady decline in membership numbers.⁹⁷

	1932	1935	1938
Total Membership (% of 1932 number)	861	767 (90%)	607 (70%)
Members retained (% of 1932 number)		613 (80%)	421 (70%)
Members leaving (% of 1932 number)		248 (20%)	346 (30%)
New Members		154	186

⁹⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 April 1934, p.3.

⁹⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 December 1935, p.6.

⁹⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 16 January 1935, p.6. Miss E.M. Ransford died in January 1935 yet still appeared on the membership list produced for the CLNU Annual General Meeting in April 1935.

⁹⁷ CLNU Membership Survey.

In the space of six years the membership had been reduced by 30% overall. Although there was a slight increase in the recruitment of new members from 1935 to 1938 this was not enough to offset the loss of increasing numbers leaving the branch.

On the positive side some 70% of the 1932 membership remained loyal to the Union for the period. The ratio of women to men remained as it had been – roughly 6 to 4. New members joining after 1935 tended to be younger, bringing the average age of the branch down from 58 to 52. Some of these may well have come up from the youth groups that had been formed in several schools in the town.

The importance of personal connections is shown in that 10% of the new joiners were family members of existing subscribers. Personal conviction was also important for others. Written additions to the 1939 Register show that many who remained in the branch were strongly motivated to serve the town during the war in other ways as ARPs, Special Constables, Auxiliary Nurses or as members of the Land Army. Despite an overall loss of members, the branch managed to retain a core whose loyalty to the Union showed resilience and permanence,

There are still many people, who, if their ideals have been restrained, continue to work to bring them again to the forefront, and in this class are the members of the Cheltenham branch of the League of Nations Union. The past year has been the most difficult in the history of the League of Nations Union... It is very gratifying, says the annual report of the Cheltenham branch, to report that so many of our members have not lost faith in the ultimate success of the League's principles and are determined to assist in the rebuilding of the League.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 6 May 1939, p.4.

Further testimony to a continued interest in the Union and the work of the League was given by the town's public librarian, Mr Herdman, who reported in 1939 that,

As in previous years, loan collections of 30 volumes have been received quarterly from the League of Nations Union library, and 182 readers have borrowed these books.⁹⁹

As a further gesture to maintain morale in the branch, the Rev. Barbara Thomas appealed to members to put increased effort into recruitment, to wear their small LNU badges, and to use the stamps that had been printed, in an effort to further the cause.¹⁰⁰ A more sombre note was sounded by Canon Goodliffe at a service of remembrance, arranged and attended by many members of the League of Nations Union. The Rector quoted the harvest parable of the man who slept when the enemy came,

I should say that all of you here tonight are free from the accusation of having slept. You have supported the League of Nations Union, you have taken an interest in it, and you have kept it going during days when most men were apathetic... You, at least, kept alight the ideals of a world peace and worked for it. But most men slept, and, as the Gospel reminded us, an enemy came and sowed the tares.¹⁰¹

Overall, despite a decline in members and a marked decline in its activities the CLNU demonstrated an admirable degree of loyalty and positivity. It managed to find new ways of engaging the public in matters of foreign policy which were not seen as direct criticism of the government. One such means were the Brains Trust meetings organised by the branch, which the public attended for free,

‘The best thing we can export after the war is not coal, but trained and balanced minds to restore the distressed and persecuted countries.’ This thought was conveyed to a large and enthusiastic gathering which attended a Brains Trust, the subject of which was, ‘The World

⁹⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 23 June 1939, p.3.

¹⁰⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 22 July 1939, p.4.

¹⁰¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 November 1939, p.1.

of To-morrow,' held at Cheltenham College on Saturday under the auspices of the League of Nations Union.¹⁰²

As late as 1944 the CLNU was able to claim that whilst many big branches of the League of Nations Union - including those at Gloucester and Stroud - had ceased to function,

the Cheltenham branch is still a live body. Furthermore, despite it being a particularly difficult year things were on the upgrade, and they had already collected 240 subscriptions.¹⁰³

Summary

This CLNU Membership Survey charts some of the *terra incognita* often associated with LNU grassroots. Together with genealogical data and press reports it enables us to explore a space where we are reminded that the Union membership was not just about statistics, but individuals going about their everyday lives and work. It sheds light on those aspects that gave the branch strength to function and endure, as well as those aspects that limited its effectiveness and caused it to decline.

In its recruitment, the CLNU achieved a broad degree of non-partisanship. Its members were representative of differing political, religious, professional, occupational, and social groups.

However, the Survey lays bare the fact that those in manual and labouring occupations or those in service were very much underrepresented. There was also a low take-up of LNU membership from Labour supporters. As specific as they might be to Cheltenham, both points do give support to the contemporary charge that nationally the LNU was mainly a middle-class organisation.

The Survey also reveals how and where the branch drew support from existing town associations – be they church or chapel congregations, literary and intellectual societies, political parties or even family groupings. However, in some ways this caused an underlying weakness for the branch. For many members with such pre-existing loyalties, their decision to join the branch was not through

¹⁰² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 3 April 1944, p.3.

¹⁰³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 July 1944, p.3.

having experienced a damascene conversion towards international liberalism; rather their recruitment was the result of a gentler social or intellectual drift, made with peers, friends or family. Within a broader framework of interests, many did not regard the Union as a single cause to be approached with high levels of engagement. Their commitment to the branch was balanced alongside several affiliations and, sometimes, competing loyalties or networks.

Taking such analysis further, behavioural studies have identified ‘group cohesion’ as an important factor in keeping organisations together – ‘it is that property which is inferred from the number and strength of mutual positive attitudes among members of the group’.¹⁰⁴ Conversely, sociologists have identified the phenomenon of ‘social loafing’ – where individuals exert less effort to achieve a goal when they work in a group than when working alone – as a reason why groups become less productive.¹⁰⁵ Some evidence of a lack of the first of these and the presence of the second is found within the workings of the CLNU. The high number of basic subscriptions (those choosing not to receive LNU publications), little activity outside formal meetings, few occasions for social bonding and scant opportunity to comment upwards within the Union, all point to the main body of members behaving passively – even at times verging on apathy.¹⁰⁶

However, the Survey also reveals some positive aspects of the branch. There was a strong core of active and committed members who worked hard to promote the Union within the town and drive forward a greater awareness of the League’s work generally. Their contribution was particularly notable within schools and amongst young people. It is testament to the enduring contribution of this group that they kept the branch going throughout the war years and were instrumental in the

¹⁰⁴ Lott, A.J. and Lott B.E., ‘Group Cohesiveness as Interpersonal Attraction: A review of relationships with antecedent and consequent variables,’ *Psychological Bulletin*, vol 64 (1965), p.259.

¹⁰⁵ Karau, S J. and Williams, K.D., ‘Social Loafing: A meta-analytic review and theoretical integration,’ *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol 65 (4) (1993), pp.681–706.

¹⁰⁶ There is scant reference to the Cheltenham branch and its activities in the national records of the LNU other than passing praise as an attractive backdrop to the 1932 meeting of the General Council.

formation of the town's branch of the UNA in 1946. As noted, though, this group was never more than 10% of the total membership.

The data shows that the main problem for the branch was that it was losing members at a faster rate than it was recruiting. A fundamental cause was that the elderly age profile of its original membership meant many members were passing away in the 1930s. However, there were other causes for members leaving. For some, like the anti-vivisectionists, it was a clash of principles – for others it was a growing disillusionment with the League's international record. A sense of *ennui* was made worse by the branch's failure to embrace new methods of propaganda and campaigning. In part, it was also the wider nature of the Union's programme which, although worthy and aspirational, had little of a 'what's in it for me' factor. Local branches and their members' subscriptions were too often seen as a milch cow for Headquarters. Likewise, they were allowed very few opportunities to make any sort of impact on the national or international stage.

Traditional interpretations for the 'failure' of the League of Nations have concentrated on the breakdown of international diplomacy and the ineffectiveness of its foreign interventions.¹⁰⁷ This chapter offers an alternative view in that its failure was in part due to the Union's inability to recruit and sustain the support of its grassroot members. The relationship between Headquarters and the branches appeared to be dominated by constant reminders for the latter to drive up their membership numbers and to increase subscriptions.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the LNU leadership often demonstrated a basic mistrust for any notion of the branches taking independent action,

¹⁰⁷ Henig, R., *The Peace that Never Was. A History of the League of Nations* (London, 2019) and *Versailles and After 1919-1933* (Haus Publishing, London, re-issued 2019).

¹⁰⁸ LSE Digital Archive: LNU/5/3-4. The Branches Committee minutes for 25 May 1933 give specific reminders and guidance as to how branch secretaries should chase up falling subscriptions. Executive Committee minutes have frequent references to falling numbers of paid members with reminders to branches to collect subscriptions.

Regional organisers should be informed that when they address public meetings they must not speak on behalf of the Union as to its policy, unless a specific policy has been in fact adopted by the Union.¹⁰⁹

On the one hand, the Survey provides evidence of a busy and purposeful branch populated by several individuals wishing to promote international liberalism and committed to the pursuit of peace. However, by revealing weaknesses in the branch, it serves as a warning to any group seeking a transformation of whole-society views, of the need to always grow and nurture its membership.

¹⁰⁹ LSE Digital Archive: LNU/2/2. Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee of the LNU. 4 March 1920.

Chapter 4. The CLNU and the Political Parties

This chapter examines the relationship between the CLNU and each of the three main political parties, and identifies factors that enabled or hindered effective and sustainable cross-party co-operation. It also considers to what extent the emergence of party (old and new) rivalries in the interwar period contributed to its collapse.

Introduction

The task of determining LNU relations with each of the main parties is not made any easier by the shifting nature of national party structures and an expanding franchise in the interwar years. As McKibbin points out, ‘the Edwardian political system was thus in many ways highly provisional, and all three parties found themselves in territory over which they had little control.’¹ Any notion of the LNU building a stable coalition between the main political parties would have required firm foundations to be in place, and this was not the case.

Nationally, the Liberal Party was fragmenting, reorganizing, and eventually collapsing. To suggest that the LNU had their support would very much depend on to what extent the local association reflected the bewildering shifting of loyalties and party factions in Westminster. In effect, this could range from Independent Liberals to those in favour of either a Labour or Conservative coalition. For instance, Cheltenham’s Liberal Party was put into a state of confusion when its leader and MP, Daniel Lipson, at first declared himself an Independent and then a Conservative. Such fluidity was often brought about by a forced response to changing world events and a pragmatic means of winning new voters. The Liberal Party that the LNU reached out to in 1920 was a very different one from that which it encountered in 1939.²

¹ McKibbin, R., *Parties and People England 1914-51* (Oxford, 2011), p.7.

² Dutton, D., ‘Liberalism and the National Government, 1931-40’, *Journal of Liberal History* 72 (2011,) pp. 38-43.

By contrast the interwar years brought some degree of stability for the Conservatives and by 1939 they had established 'a political supremacy which seemed unchallengeable'.³ They either held office or were the dominant element in a National Government for most of the interwar period, and in Baldwin they found a leader who brought the party much needed unity.⁴ However, divisions remained for some Conservatives, not least on the issue of forming a coalition with Labour and for those who regarded Baldwin as too much of a moderate.

The Conservative party in Cheltenham was not without its challenges. In 1928 its popular and long-serving MP Sir James Agg-Gardner died, leaving the party to find a new candidate for the first time in eighteen years. Whilst the Liberal challenge was diminishing a new one was emerging in the shape of Labour. In the 1928 election, Conservative candidate Walter Preston's vote dropped below 50% and victory only came about because the opposition vote was split between Labour and Liberals. In 1937, Daniel Lipson's attempts to join the Conservative party were thwarted. Forced instead to stand as an Independent against the Conservative's official candidate, he successfully put an end to their ascendancy in the town.⁵

Despite forming office twice in the interwar decades, the Labour Party too was not without its problems. These included a 'confusion of policies,' 'strategic muddle', 'damaging relations with the Unions' and a leadership that 'in some ways was intellectually ill-fitted to cope.'⁶ Cheltenham's relationship with its newly formed Labour party was a volatile one and its connections with Unions and Communism left it vulnerable to attacks from the town's Right.⁷ In preparation for the 1928 election the Party had to choose its parliamentary candidate and express its opinions very carefully if

³ McKibbin, *Parties and People*, p.106.

⁴ Watts, D., *Stanley Baldwin, and the Search for Consensus* (Trowbridge, 1996), pp.139-44.

⁵ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 26 June 1937. Lipson defeated the official Conservative candidate Lt-Col Tristram Harper by 10,553 votes to 10,194.

⁶ McKibbin, *Parties and People*, pp.69-84.

⁷ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 2 April 1927, p.2.

they were to receive credibility from the town's voters. Its candidate Miss Widowson had to make clear her dissociation from any form of Communism,

She is one of those who is absolutely opposed to the "Reds" being allowed within the ranks of the Labour Party proper and has herself proposed a resolution to that effect at conference in the Midlands. We understand that at the meeting at which she was adopted Miss Widdowson was challenged on this point and was unswerving in her declaration that the Labour Party can, and should, do without the support of the Communists.⁸

Although the LNU and the Labour Party shared aspirations for world peace and harmonious internationalism, tensions existed in their relationship, with the Labour Party finding reasons for not supporting the League.⁹ Likewise, Labour members identified with socialism could cause problems for the Union, and did not always find a ready welcome within its ranks. Such concerns were expressed by the Minister of Labour (Arthur Steel-Maitland) in a complaint to Lord Cecil in 1926,

I would very much like to have a talk with you sometime soon about a matter which has been causing me some anxiety; that is the way in which the League of Nations Union is being exploited by Socialists....It would be a vast pity if the fact that the ILO deals with labour questions should be used as an instrument for trying to get the whole League of Nations largely permeated with a particular political flavour.¹⁰

Whilst the LNU was not an institution any of the three main parties wished to alienate, they could not afford to give it unconditional support, especially in times when alternatives to the League's policies became more popular with voters. Likewise, although foreign policy was not an area the political parties could afford to ignore in terms of voters' support, it was, in the view of one

⁸ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 27 November 1926, p.9.

⁹ Diamond, P and Radice, G., *Labour's Civil Wars: How Infighting Keeps the Left from Power (and What Can Be Done about It)* (Haus Publishing 2022), p.65. Argues that the coming of war saw Labour emerge as an anti-appeasement patriotic party able to ally with dissident Tories such as Churchill and Eden in resisting the rise of Hitler.

¹⁰ British Library: MSS Cecil Add.51071B fol. 94r.

historian, when compared to the immediacy of a number of domestic issues in the interwar decades, 'electorally marginal.'¹¹

Some general histories dismiss Britain's interwar politics as defunct of moral status and energy in the field of internationalism. Mellers and Hildyard argue this was particularly so in the 1930s, when the League began to fall apart in the face of German aggression,

Britain was left with the thankless and dangerous role of a fat and flabby dowager playing policeman to a den of thieves.¹²

However, this was not the prevailing mood of the early 1920s. Pugh observes the irony that, 'in a curious way, as the Liberal party itself disintegrated, liberal ideas about peace dispersed into a receptive population.'¹³ There was a genuine optimism and commitment to a cross-party approach towards international cooperation and a need to work collaboratively to avoid any future repetition of the horrors of the war just fought. Many local communities sought to create some tangible remembrance of this idea.¹⁴

The Wider Debate

Early histories of the LNU stressing its non-partisan nature took their cue from the LNU's own literature, which emphasized the notion that peace and international co-operation were beyond party politics,

we are non-party because we are pursuing an aim that goes deeper than the differences of party – let us never for a moment forget that profound truth about the LON movement.¹⁵

¹¹ McKibbin, *Parties and People*, p.192.

¹² Mellers, W. and Hildyard, R., 'The inter-war years' in *Early 20th Century Britain – The Cambridge Cultural History* ed. Ford, B. (CUP, 1992), p. 28.

¹³ Pugh, M., *Liberal Internationalism* (London, 2012), p.3.

¹⁴ See for example, Inglis, K.S., 'The Homecoming: The War Memorial Movement in Cambridge, England', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (October, 1992), pp.583-605.

¹⁵ LSE: LNU/1/2.75. Gilbert Murray quoted in *Headway* - General Council 27 June 1930.

Writing in 1921 to Murray, Cecil expressed the view that the Union should look to the non-political mass of those people,

who did not vote at the last election, those conservatives who are not reactionary or [those who] passionately desire clean and honest government – a ministry of plain blunt men who would advocate conciliation and a union of classes.¹⁶

Likewise, the LNU's Royal Charter of 1925 spoke of 'citizens of all parties.'¹⁷ Despite a powerful Liberal presence in its LNU leadership, there was all-party representation in its national committees. The Executive attracted those of a centralist temperament (Cecil, Murray, Angell). Others had also joined cross-party groups such as the Council of Action for Peace and Reconstruction.

When it came to establishing local branches, the LNU attempted to demonstrate its balance with an ambitious plan to create a 'platform party' of twenty-five speakers, six each from the Liberals, Conservatives and Labour, together with six of various denominations, representing the Church, who would speak at local events.¹⁸ However, whereas appointments could be controlled and balanced at a leadership level, it was far more difficult for the LNU to control the political complexion of the membership. Branches were reminded to recruit officers from across the political spectrum but with the political affiliations of CLNU members not always clear to determine, it is hard to measure how well this was achieved. Tensions sometimes existed between the Union's leadership and the branches. Directives and communications from HQ suggest that some branches could be inclined to resort to more partisan or traditional allegiances and needed to be brought back into line.¹⁹ LNU leadership found it necessary to warn against sectional bodies taking control during elections and to

¹⁶ Bodleian Library: Gilbert Murray Papers MSS 185-189. 26 May 1921 Cecil to Murray.

¹⁷ *The Royal Charter, Bye-Laws and Rules of the League of Nations Union*. 1925 revised December 1933 (Pelican Press, London).

¹⁸ LSE: LNU/2/10. Executive Committee minutes 17 February 1919. Report from Organization Committee.

¹⁹ Bodleian Library: as above. Cecil writes of the need to send speakers from HQ to the branches to carry out election campaigns as he does not trust the local officers.

remind branches of the need to engage with candidates of all parties and to refrain from any partisan behaviour.²⁰

Birn suggests that the LNU, in steering clear of direct involvement in electoral politics, ‘was a different type’ of British non-party organisation, one more familiar to the American political scene. However, although its leadership positions were carefully distributed to all three parties, he doubts whether this was truly achieved as Liberals, the most natural Leaguers, had more than their share of seats on the Executive Committee. There were also weaknesses in such a stance, as Birn argues – ‘balanced from within and cautious about giving offence without, the LNU had chosen a tricky role to play on the political stage.’²¹

Newer histories of the LNU are less inclined to embrace its ‘foundation myth’ and treat claims to non-party status with a degree of scepticism.²² Pugh and Birn point to a predominance of Liberals in the early years.²³ Ceadel on the other hand, suggests that from the mid-1930s, with the Peace Ballot, there was an increasing convergence with Labour foreign policy.²⁴ There is general agreement that support from Conservatives was tepid at best.

However, rather than dismissing this non-party stance as a convenient smoke screen for its Liberal-left bias, it is important to consider the League’s place within the dynamics of party politics. The LNU was operating within considerable political flux and the fluidity of party labels and proliferation of cross-party groups in the 1930s provided a pragmatic justification for such a non-party strategy. There was also evidence outside of government of a growing belief that non-party bodies could become significant players in the political process.²⁵

²⁰ LSE: LNU/2/12 167. Draft letter from Cecil attached to Executive Committee minutes. ‘The Executive Committee, including as it does persons belonging to all parties, continues to maintain and develop the proposals which, irrespective of any partisan considerations, it considers best suited to advance the cause of international co-operation.’

²¹ Birn, *The League of Nations Union*, p.28/9.

²² McCarthy, *The British People*, p.46-51.

²³ Pugh, *Liberal Internationalism*, p.16.

²⁴ Ceadel, M., ‘The First British Referendum: The Peace Ballot,’ *English Historical Review* (1980), pp.810-839.

²⁵ For example, The Save the Children Fund.

This case study examines how well notions of a non-party stance and interparty co-operation stood up at grassroots level. A limiting factor on such an investigation is that the political loyalties of individual members are not always readily discernible – and even when identified, they are not necessarily fixed over a period of two decades. However, the affiliations of an individual can be ascertained where they were prominent within their local parties or by their inclusion on lists of those nominating parliamentary candidates. Corporate membership can also help identify the affiliations of those who joined the CLNU. The examples discussed here are those where an individual's political attachments are clear.

The CLNU stressed from the start that it would maintain a non-party stance. In a letter appearing in the *Gloucestershire Echo* in 1924, written by the CLNU's secretary, Monro Briggs, he reacted firmly against a poster linking 'Vote for the Liberal Candidate and the League of Nations', declaring the branch's impartiality,

the League is non-party and non-sectarian. The three political parties in the late House of Commons are pledged to support the League. At the meetings of the General Council in London I have heard both Prof. Gilbert Murray, a Liberal, and Lord Cecil, a Conservative, deprecate very strongly any partisan claims to the League, and also to express the hope that all delegates would at once check any attempt of that nature. ²⁶

Prior to parliamentary elections, the branch made sure to canvas the views of prospective political candidates from all parties.²⁷ Similarly, it took a cross-party approach with its arrangements for conducting the National Declaration. However, as the 1930s progressed a gradual breakdown of cross-party accord appears that brought division within the ranks of the CLNU. Members of the branch were prepared to take a more independent and partisan approach to events which challenged

²⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 22 October 1924, p.5.

²⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 16 October 1924, p.5. 'The electors were urged to obtain from all candidates at the coming general election promises of whole-hearted support for the League'.

the views and consensus sought by its leadership. This trajectory demonstrates how early cross-party co-operation, over time and in changing circumstances, became stretched and tested by more traditional party affiliations.

The Local Context

In documenting the LNU's role in party politics at a national level, McCarthy admits that there is more to be done at the local level.

There were undoubtedly complex regional variations in the LNU's political composition which further micro-historical work would help uncover.²⁸

By studying a local branch in detail we can begin to unravel some of those complexities.

The formation of the CLNU came about through a mixture of local interest and a strong steer from LNU headquarters following a meeting held at the Mansion House, London, in October 1919. The LNU quickly appreciated that if the League were to survive and be effective, it would need a great deal of public support. It became the task of the Union to engage with and, where necessary, educate the public of the need for international co-operation if future wars were to be avoided. As part of the drive to educate the public, Cecil launched his Mansion House Campaign. The mayors of all boroughs were requested to hold a national celebration on November 11th and consider raising funds for the League. Cheltenham's Mayor, Alderman Bendall, replied that the town could not make these preparations at such short notice. Instead, after having met with the regional adviser for the LNU, he announced his intention to call a meeting in the Town Hall on 28th November. It would inform those who wished to find out more about the League, distribute propaganda and collect funds. The idea met with the approval of the local press who promised to give the event full publicity.²⁹

²⁸ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.53.

²⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 22 October 1919, p.4.

Agents from LNU headquarters had already been active in the wider locality. In May that year a successful meeting was held at Stroud in support of the foundation of an LNU branch. At this meeting a strong guiding hand was given by Mr H. Jefferson, the Bristol-based regional organiser for the south-west division and Mr J. Exten from London. With the chairman pointing out that the League was ‘splendidly wide and embracing,’ representatives of all three political parties were invited. Sir Ashton Lister MP (Liberal) and Capt. C. Wye Kendall (prospective Labour candidate) were present, and Mr Stanley Tubbs (Unionist) sent his apologies. The meeting concluded by approving the formation of a Stroud branch.³⁰

The LNU also targeted Cheltenham with its propaganda. A meeting in the previous April in the parish rooms of St James was planned to coincide with the teachers’ conference being held there. The aim was to encourage teachers to join up and support the Union – however, on this occasion it was a disappointment with only five teachers reported as attending.³¹ Happily for the LNU, the November Town Hall meeting was a more successful affair. Adverts had gone out previously inviting all those interested in forming a local branch to attend. The stage party consisted of the Mayor, the town clerk, an Alderman, the Rector, and number of local clergyman (all Anglican vicars), two local doctors and Mr Monro Briggs. It is not clear whether this group simply regarded it as their responsibility to offer a lead in any matter of local importance or whether they had a specific interest in promoting the LNU. Although predominantly Conservative in make-up it did contain at least one Liberal – a Dr Richard Davies, who later became chair of the town’s Liberal Association.³²

As with the Stroud meeting, the Headquarters’ representative, Mr Jefferson, took a prominent role. Having first congratulated the promoters on the large attendance he sketched the progress of the Union so far and that its object was to educate and inform public opinion as to what the League of

³⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 5 May 1919, p.3.

³¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 23 April 1919, p.3.

³² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 November 1919, p.5. ‘Dr. R. Davies, in seconding, said the representative attendance showed that Cheltenham was taking up this subject in earnest.’ Gloucestershire Archives: D15946/1. Minute Book of the Cheltenham Liberal Association, December. Davies was elected chair at the Annual General Meeting in December 1919

Nations was and what it meant for the future of the world. He explained that the country would be divided into sixteen regions, each with a council formed of representatives of the various branches within the region. These regional councils would have the power to send representatives to the national council of the Union. Not mentioned in his speech, was the notion that part of their function was to act as a centralised check on any local branches attempting to develop a degree of independence and go against the directives and wishes of LNU headquarters.³³

The LNU had to tread a difficult line in finding ways of harnessing the local enthusiasm of the branches whilst not raising their hopes in terms of autonomy. In response to questioning, Mr Jefferson said that each branch would be at liberty to shape its course - he thought that besides lectures and meetings, a certain social element might be introduced. The subscription for the year to cover the cost of publications was a nominal sum of a shilling (part of which would be retained by the local branch). Again, he stressed that the movement was entirely non-party, and the Union would be entirely independent of the Foreign Office.³⁴

A resolution to form a local branch was carried unanimously. A provisional committee was formed, headed by the Mayor and with Monro Briggs its honorary secretary. It was tasked with drawing up a constitution for the branch and to arrange a public demonstration later that month.³⁵

Relations with the Local Parties

a. Conservatives

On the platform at the Town Hall meeting were those who formed much of the driving force behind the foundation of the local branch and included Council officials, leaders of the local churches and

³³ LSE Digital Archive: LNU3/6. LNU Management Committee Minutes, 6 November 1919. Cecil and Murray present. Resolved that 'the branches should have their position and their functions made clear to them so that they will have definite objects to work for'.

³⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 November 1919, p.5.

³⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 November 1919, p.5.

members of the legal and medical professions. Their political allegiance was mainly Conservative, with one of the strongest endorsements for the LNU provided by the local Conservative MP, Sir James Agg-Gardner.

Since gaining its parliamentary seat in 1832, the borough had regularly changed hands between the Whigs and Conservatives. Born in 1846, Sir James Agg-Gardner came from a local brewing family. His father had unsuccessfully stood as the town's Conservative candidate in 1841 and 1848 against the influential and powerful Whigs of the Berkeley family. His father's death in 1858 left the twelve-year-old James heir to his father's business – and his political ambitions. After attending Harrow, he began his studies at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1866, but when the Conservative candidacy for the borough became available, he was persuaded to abandon these for politics. Despite facing some criticism for his tender years, he was unanimously accepted by the local party and launched his campaign announcing that 'hide-bound Toryism and resistance to change' had no part in his philosophy.³⁶

Agg-Gardner lost his first election but remained adopted by the party and after 'nursing the constituency'³⁷ (attending and addressing meetings and discharging political and charitable duties) he was successfully elected in 1874. He proved a popular candidate with many of the town's voters and held the seat four times between 1874 and 1911. At the end of the Great War, Agg-Gardner voted to stay with Lloyd-George's wartime coalition at the historic Carlton Club meeting in 1922 and went on to beat Liberal opponents at the elections of 1922, 1923 and 1924. In a record of eight returns for the borough, he sat in Parliament for a total of 39 years over a span of 54 years. Despite his popularity locally, Agg-Gardner rarely spoke in Parliament – however, one notable exception was his support for the unsuccessful 1912 bill to give women the vote, of which he was one of the very few senior Tory supporters.

³⁶ Agg-Gardner, J., *Some Parliamentary Recollections* (London, 1927), p.35.

³⁷ Agg-Gardner, J., *Some Parliamentary Recollections* (London, 1927), p.47.

Agg-Gardner was not able to attend the November 1919 Town Hall meeting but in sending his apologies stated that he would,

cordially support any decision you may arrive at which will promote and further the objects of your meeting. I have from the first been an advocate of the establishment of the League of Nations. I was indeed a member of the first Committee formed in the House of Commons to consider how the idea could best be promulgated. I trust that the movement will receive sympathy in Cheltenham.

He suggested that the branch obtained the co-operation of the Right Honourable Sir Willoughby Dickinson, (formerly chairman of London County Council and a Gloucestershire man), someone who had been in the forefront of establishing a League of Nations Society in England.³⁸

Agg-Gardner repeated his endorsement for the LNU when a second Town Hall meeting was called in February 1920. The provisional committee had invited Sir Hugh Cecil (brother of Sir Robert Cecil and Tory MP for Oxford) to address the borough in advance of the new branch being formed. Once Cecil had spoken, the Rector gave a vote of thanks which Agg-Gardner seconded saying,

He had always maintained the deepest sympathy with the objects of the meeting. He knew there were those who said the objects of the League were impossible of attainment, but he did not believe it was the case.

He referred to the growth of the Arbitration Society with only twenty members at its first meeting, but by the start of the war was attended by hundreds of persons, including representatives of the various Parliaments of Europe, the United States, the Dominion of Canada, and from South America. He concluded that if such an organisation could arise from such small beginnings, surely the League of Nations, launched by statesmen of eminence in both hemispheres, must have much greater

³⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 November 1919, p.5.

success.³⁹ Despite such initial interest, how enduring and active Agg-Gardner's support for the LNU was, is questionable given the thinness of his parliamentary record in Hansard on it and on international cooperation generally.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, for now, such speeches and endorsements propelled the mood of the town forwards and with the motion carried, the Rector (Rev. H.A. Wilson) confirmed the action of the provisional committee in forming a local branch of the League of Nations. The Rev. Stone (Salem Baptist Church) congratulated the town on having so many ladies and gentlemen with the courage to take action in the matter.⁴¹

The endorsement of its sitting Conservative MP brought kudos to the town's newly formed LNU branch, but support of a much more practical type came in the form of a Mr Joshua Monro Briggs. Monro Briggs, listed as a retired commercial traveller in the 1911 census, was an active grassroots Tory. He served as treasurer in his local ward association and he and his wife Annie were active members of the town's Conservative and Unionist Association (acting as Agg-Gardner's counting agent in the 1924 election) and were members of the local habitation of the Primrose League.⁴² More importantly, Monro Briggs was at the centre of a number of committees that worked throughout the town including: the local Guardians Committee, All Saints Vestry Committee, The National Vigilance Committee, the National Saving Movements and the War Savings Committee. Through his associational networks the branch benefitted from valuable contact with various groups across the town.

³⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 28 February 1920, p.5. It is unclear exactly what Agg-Gardner was referring to but for international arbitration pre-World War One, see: Quataert, J. H. *International Law and the Laws of War* (<https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/international-law-and-the-laws-of-war>) (2014).

⁴⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 March 1919, p.4. Reported that Agg-Gardner asked in Parliament what action had been taken to bring before the Peace Conference a need for international cooperation in putting into force the Articles of the Opium Convention of 1912 for the control of the production and distribution of cocaine and other drugs of addiction.

⁴¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 28 February 1920, p.5.

⁴² *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 2 April 1910, pp.14-15. At a Conservative pre-election meeting, it was stated that Monro Briggs had 'rendered valuable assistance in various ways' to the local party. Later that year he was awarded the Primrose League's election bar.

Monro Briggs frequently appears in the press raising money for various worthy causes, such as the local hospital,⁴³ the Police orphanage,⁴⁴ and the RNLI.⁴⁵ For a number of years before the war, he was instrumental in organising the annual Robin's Christmas Treat for the town's poor children.⁴⁶ Early signs of internationalism might be found in his organising and participating in 1915 in a 'Russian and Serbian Day'.⁴⁷ Monro Briggs was a well-established figure in many aspects of the town's life and respected for his work across many fields. More importantly for the nascent CLNU he brought with him a wide range of experiences and contacts with other organisations. His contribution throughout the first decade of the CLNU's existence was immense, and at the CLNU's annual meeting in 1926 when he was re-installed as honorary secretary, the Mayor referred to him as the 'life and soul of the branch'.⁴⁸ On his stepping down as honorary secretary (aged 73) in 1934, the then CLNU's chair (Lipson) acknowledged that,

Mr. Monro Briggs had worked like a Trojan for years for the cause of the League of Nations Union, and had been extremely successful in Cheltenham, where he had enrolled, or had been responsible for enrolling, 2,574 members, in addition to twelve corporate members. He had been responsible for the formation of a number of important branches in the county, such as Winchcombe, Painswick, and Brockhampton who owed their birth and their continued survival to his work.

In honouring him, the branch also desired to express their appreciation of all that Mrs. Monro Briggs had done for the cause, in actively encouraging her husband in his work. They were grateful to both

⁴³ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 1 December 1917, pp.9-10. Mentioned that in his efforts to raise money for linen for the town's VAD hospitals, Monro Briggs had 'proved a most efficient and indefatigable honorary secretary and treasurer.'

⁴⁴ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 13 October 1917, p.8. Briggs was honorary treasurer of the Police Orphanage Fund.

⁴⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 17 November 1915, p.1. 'May I ask you also to kindly convey our sincere thanks to Mr. Monro Briggs for so kindly acting as honorary treasurer and organising the counting of the money at the head depot.'

⁴⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 3 November 1911, p.4. 'The committee of the Robins' annual Christmas treat, winter meals, and boot fund for poor children are again appealing for funds, and as the object is good that we hope they will not appeal in vain. Last year 16,000 meals were given, and 1,000 pairs of boots distributed.'

⁴⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 22 October 1915, p.5.

⁴⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 31 March 1926, p.3.

and expressing their affection for them personally they hoped that they would see prosper the cause for which they had worked for so many years.⁴⁹

Another local Conservative who supported the LNU was Charles Henry Margrett, chair of the Conservative Association and the town's seven-times Mayor. Margrett served on the CLNU committee in the 1920s and became its chair in 1928. Like many others he expressed a support for the League that came directly from the suffering of the war in that,

every right-thinking man and woman must regard with horror the tragedy of war, and it behoved them to do everything possible to prevent war between nations in the future.⁵⁰

He believed that could be done if they could get every nation into the League, and he looked forward to the time when the United States would join hands with England and the other nations.

However, Agg-Gardner's, Monro Briggs' and Margrett's support for the Union was not one universally shared by others in the party, both nationally and locally. Although not as forthright in their criticisms as Amery, other leading Conservatives expressed their misgivings. Speaking in the House of Commons debate on disarmament in 1932, Winston Churchill remarked that although he had a great deal of sympathy with the well-meaning, loyal hearted people who make up the League of Nations Union, 'what impresses me most about them is their long suffering and inexhaustible gullibility'.⁵¹ Locally within the Conservative Association, although the official party line remained in place to support the League, there were those members who doubted its effectiveness.⁵²

⁴⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 26 January 1934, p.7.

⁵⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 November 1926, p.4.

⁵¹ *Hansard*. HC Deb. 23 November 1932 vol. 272 cc73-211.

⁵² *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 25 May 1935, p.7. Sir Walter Preston (Conservative candidate) admitted at a Cheltenham Conservative Association meeting, 'No one realises better than I do the possibilities of the League's greatness or how, so far, it has disappointed many of its advocates, but I am satisfied that the League can do this work and do it properly. I know I shall not be popular in putting forward this proposal, for the League has many critics, but I am here not to say what is popular, but what I believe is right. Some of these critics would like to see the League done away with altogether.'

Indeed, writing in 1944, the Oxford historian R. B. McCullum, summarised the Conservative attitude towards the League as ‘broadly one of distrust and contempt’.⁵³ Conservative defence policy was much more supportive of an Imperial defence strategy and the building up of the Royal Navy than in placing trust in international collective security.⁵⁴ Certainly, as time went by Conservative support in Cheltenham for the League cooled somewhat. At his 1929 election meeting, Sir Walter Preston, the Conservative candidate showed a distinct distancing from the League when asked a question on his attitude to the League and arbitration,

To drag the League of Nations and its policy into an election question was a great mistake. It was the grossest impertinence for us at home, not knowing the undercurrents, to tell our representatives “Do this” or “Don’t do that.” The Government had been doing all it could for peace and the reduction of armaments... The League was a great weapon for Peace, but it had to be handled wisely.⁵⁵

This was demonstrated again in 1937 when all three of the borough’s candidates were invited to speak at a Town Hall meeting to give their views on the League. Both Liberal and Labour candidates were fulsome in their support – Lipson (Liberal) declared that he wholeheartedly believed in the League of Nations and rejoiced that it was the corner stone of the foreign policy of every responsible party in this country. By contrast, the Conservative candidate, Lieutenant-Colonel Tristram Harper, conspicuously hedged his opinions with a good deal of caution and reserve. Drawing attention to those nations who had left the League and whose abandonment had left it weakened and emasculated, he likened it to,

a wheel rolling along the road of history, supporting civilisation. Its hub is peace, and this can only be stabilised by spokes consisting of all the countries of the world. With several of these

⁵³ McCullum, R.B., *Public Opinion, and the Last Peace* (London, 1944), p.138.

⁵⁴ Seldon, A., ‘Conservative Century’ in *The Conservative Party since 1900*, ed. by Seldon, A. and Ball, S. (New York, 1994), p.24.

⁵⁵ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 25 May 1929, p.4.

removed, smoothness, speed and safety are gone, and one can but hobble along with the greatest caution to avoid collapse.

He concluded by saying that although the League was not a complete lost cause, much change was needed to bring back into the circle those who had left, if it were ever to be effective again.⁵⁶

Conservative opposition to the League had manifested itself earlier in other ways within the borough. In January 1921 Mr Stewart had raised opposition to the Library Committee purchasing a subscription to the LON Quarterly magazine on the grounds that 'no-one ever reads it'.⁵⁷ The following year, at a meeting of the Town Improvement Committee a proposal was put to lower the hiring charge of the town hall for the Union from £10 to £5. Conservative opposition came in the form of Mr. Pruen, who moved that the proposal be not adopted, and Captain Trye who argued that whilst accepting that the League of Nations was an apolitical organisation, he did not agree that a 'particular cult or view should not have to pay for its propaganda'.⁵⁸

A year later, the debate moved to the Education Committee to whom a request was made to introduce an essay competition in the town's schools on the work of the League. Once again Captain Trye moved that the recommendation be not approved, arguing that if the Education Committee started allowing political things to come into schools, they 'would have every political stunt.... they would turn the schools into political battlegrounds'.⁵⁹

Undaunted, Trye kept up his challenge to the CLNU and in 1936, now an Alderman, at a meeting of the Art Gallery and Museum criticised that the Art Gallery had been granted to the CLNU for a series of its lectures. He argued that it was the last place the Committee should allow to be used for political activities. It was one thing to allow the gallery to be used for educational societies, but to let

⁵⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 16 June 1937, p.4 .

⁵⁷ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 January 1921, p.6. Report of Cheltenham Town Council.

⁵⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 4 April 1922, p.2.

⁵⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 November 1923, p.1.

it for what was political association, and indeed one which was at the present time ‘not in the best odour,’ was not correct. Again, Trye’s stance was met with dissent from the rest of the committee. Mayor Margrett affirmed that the lectures had been of an educational not a political nature and that nothing had been said at them that ‘even Alderman Trye could object to.’⁶⁰

It is significant that in a number of the above cases, attempts to hinder the work of the local Union branch were defeated by groups which included Conservatives. Conservative support of the LNU very much depended on local circumstances and in Cheltenham, it was certainly a factor in the establishment of the local branch. Whilst the party leadership (Baldwin, Chamberlain, and Churchill) remained lukewarm to the Union, party opposition was never monolithic at local level. Indeed, this spirit of an initial local cross-party co-operation may well have found some antecedent in the County Council’s decision to regard itself as a non-party body, with both political parties having equal representation.⁶¹

Despite a strong desire to promote the peace cause, the public mood towards the League initially remained a wait-and-see one, with some correspondence in the press doubting that it had any chance of survival at all. However, within the borough there was sufficient momentum by February 1920 for the newly formed Cheltenham branch to launch its campaign for members.

Under the auspices of the Cheltenham branch of the LNU, a very fine meeting was held in the Town Hall on Friday evening, at which the chief speaker was Lord Hugh Cecil, MP. All parts of the building were well filled, including the gallery and the balconies, which were reserved for ladies.⁶²

By now a fuller and more representative group of local dignitaries formed the platform party. As well as representatives from the nonconformist churches, (Revs. C. E. Stone and J. Foster) a broad

⁶⁰ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 February 1936, p.5.

⁶¹ Agg-Gardner, J., *Some Parliamentary Recollections* (London. 1927), p.216.

⁶² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 28 February 1920, p.5.

mix of political support was indicated by the presence of Mr G. Blagg (Labour), Ald. R. Steel (chairman of the Liberal Association), Councillor Mr A. Mann (Conservative) and Mr T. Lyon (Unionist). The branch committee now had its elected officers: Mr B. Auden (honorary treasurer) and Mr J. Monro Briggs (honorary secretary) together with a large committee.⁶³

b. Liberals

Contemporary and later commentators agree that the LNU was fully identified with Liberalism and stood ‘as an obvious focal point for Liberals feeling intellectually and morally dispossessed by the war’.⁶⁴ Pugh argues that not for nothing was the LNU called the Liberal Party at Prayer’ and that it acted in a realm of surrogate politics, for many Liberals ‘dis-established by the Party’s political decline.’⁶⁵ This was less apparent in Cheltenham to begin with, due to a Conservative ascendancy in the borough’s politics. The situation was also made worse by division within the Liberals themselves. It took a while for the town’s Liberals to embrace the Union but over time a significant Liberal force developed within the branch.

In 1918 Cheltenham was held by Sir James Agg-Gardner, a Conservative supporter of the coalition government. Local Liberals however, wanted to break free of the coalition and set themselves up as independent Liberals – in the main, backing the leadership of Lord Asquith. Their problem was that Agg-Gardner was an experienced and popular figure and there were no obvious local candidates that could put up against him. Instead, the local Liberal Association persuaded the Right Hon. T. McKinnon Wood to stand. An editorial in April 1920 in the *Gloucestershire Echo* introduced him to its readers as ‘a gentleman who has held various important offices of state and has filled a seat in a Liberal Cabinet.’⁶⁶ Despite serving under Asquith, McKinnon Wood had not been offered a post in

⁶³ Rev. Webb Peploe, Rev. Cousts Petch, Councillor Miss Clara Winterbotham, Miss Geddes, Mrs Jordan, Miss Jordan, Alderman Mr Margrett, Dr Pruett, Dr R. Davies, Major Lloyd, Councillor Stanley, Mr R. R. Dobson, Mr H. E. Hardy, Mr T. J. James, Mr A. Quelch.

⁶⁴ McCarthy, *The British People*, pp.53-56.

⁶⁵ Pugh, *Liberal Internationalism*, pp.14-19.

⁶⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 April 1920, p.3. Wood was a member of H. H. Asquith's cabinet as Secretary for Scotland between 1912 and 1916 and as Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster between

Lloyd George's coalition ministry and in 1918 he lost his Glasgow seat. Cheltenham's Liberals might have been pleased with their candidate, but he made little impression on the local press who pointed out both his lack of any connection with the town and that he and his fellow Asquithian Liberals were 'wanderers in the wilderness because rightly or wrongly (we think rightly) the country was profoundly dissatisfied with their conduct of the war'.⁶⁷ Division and confusion in Liberal ranks was made apparent with the *Cheltenham Chatterer* pointing to the result of the General Election which returned 133 Coalition Liberals to only 28 Independent Liberals and that the simple term "Liberal" would seem to be more applicable not to Mr. Wood, but to those who were in opposition to him.⁶⁸

Standing when he did, McKinnon Wood could well have made capital from the town's enthusiasm to set up an LNU branch. However, his election speech made no mention of it, nor indeed the League of Nations. Instead he 'spoke earnestly and impressively of the noble motives which impelled the Liberal Government (of which he was a member) to embark on the war, and he contrasted these with the selfish and materialistic spirit which appeared to characterise many of the acts and policies of the existing Coalition.'⁶⁹ Unsurprisingly McKinnon Wood's candidature only lasted a year and in December 1921 he announced he was standing down in Cheltenham. Nominally the reason given was his wife's ill health, but the press's view was that,

his occasional presence in Cheltenham evoked such a small degree of enthusiasm to give even a sanguine person only moderate grounds upon which to base any hopes of success, and has probably been a larger factor in bringing about his decision. We hear, in fact, that even

July and December 1916. He was also involved in London politics and served as chairman of the London County Council between 1898 and 1899.

⁶⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 April 1920, p.3.

⁶⁸ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 17 April 1920, p.3. The Cheltenham Chatter was a regular and long-standing feature (begun in 1888) in the *Chronicle* covering local items, news and gossip written by 'Chatterer'.

⁶⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 April 1920, p.3.

some of his own best friends and well-wishers in the town are amongst those who held the view that there was little to be hoped from his candidature.⁷⁰

The Liberals' next bid to defeat Agg-Gardner was the adoption of Cuthbert Plaistowe as their candidate in June 1922. This move turned out even worse for the Liberals. Not only was he defeated but on the announcement of the vote he was forced to leave the Town Hall by the back door when a 'raging mob' turned up. Whilst claiming not to be a bad loser and that he could take defeat like a man, Plaistowe informed the local Liberals that he had been told at London Headquarters that Cheltenham was 'a corrupt borough' – not least with six or seven hundred pounds being spent on liquor in one year. One of the reasons for Plaistowe alienating a good deal of local opinion was his campaign suggesting public houses should be closed on Sunday. Bruised but undeterred by his defeat, Plaistowe was persuaded to stand against Agg-Gardner on two more occasions in 1923 and 1924 – each time cutting back the Conservative vote. Having initially taken a pro-Asquith stance (and an anti-Lloyd George one) and with Agg-Gardner expressing full support for the League, Plaistowe began to express his own support for it. In 1923 the Cheltenham branch of the National Council of Women sent both candidates for the Cheltenham Parliamentary Election a questionnaire. In it they asked,

a) are you in favour of the League of Nations, and of all nations being brought within the League?

b) are you in favour of reducing armaments by agreement with other nations?

The response of both Agg-Gardner and Plaistowe was an emphatic 'yes'.⁷¹ Likewise, at a public CLNU meeting held in the Town Hall the previous year, both Agg-Gardner and Plaistowe had given a vote of thanks to the speakers, with the latter announcing that he hoped the covenant of the League

⁷⁰ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 10 December 1921, p.8.

⁷¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 4 December 1923, p.4.

would be ‘the charter of our foreign policy on the years to come’.⁷² By 1925 the CLNU was fully identified with the Liberals and vice versa. In a speech of that year on ‘the future of Liberalism’ given to the town’s Liberal Association, Mr F.W. Raffety (former MP for Bath and a future candidate for Cheltenham) declared that ‘the Liberal Party believed in the rights of other nations and was united in its support of the League of Nations’.⁷³

Several of the town’s Liberals became officers or played a prominent role in the local LNU branch. Among this group was the five times Mayor of Cheltenham, Clara Winterbotham. She came from a distinguished county family of Liberals and nonconformists. Her grandfather, James, and her father, John, had both been prominent in borough politics and her brother, Cyril, stood as the Liberal candidate for East Gloucestershire before the war. She was educated at Cheltenham Ladies College and after travels to Germany and India, served as a VAD nurse in the War for which she was awarded an MBE. With the death of her brother Cyril in 1916 and the retirement from politics of her other brother, Percy, the mantle of service fell on her shoulders. In 1919 a group of associates and friends suggested to her to stand for the Borough Council. Cheltenham’s council had a few co-opted seats which were distributed equally between the parties but she at first refused one of these, choosing instead to stand (as a Liberal), and be elected for a town ward. Her appointment was a welcome one,

Her election as first lady councillor for Cheltenham will give much satisfaction to all parties. She will not only carry on the tradition which has for so long given the town the benefit of service on its governing body of a member of one of its most honourable families, but she will also bring to the discharge of the duties of a Town Councillor quality of mind and heart

⁷² *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 4 November 1922, p.6.

⁷³ Gloucestershire Archives: D15946/1. Minute Book of Cheltenham Liberal Association, March 1925.

which eminently fit her for this position. A happier selection could not have been made by the political party with which Miss Winterbotham has identified herself.⁷⁴

Clara Winterbotham had led the women's section of the Liberal party for many years and pushed for its merger with the men's section in 1919 on the grounds that as a 'consequence of the vote having been granted to women it was deemed advisable to revise the constitution of the associations'.⁷⁵ She made a significant impact on the local party and in 1923 she was elected as vice-chair and its honorary secretary. It was even suggested at one time that she should stand as candidate for the town's seat – something she declined on the grounds that she could serve the town's interest better by remaining a councillor.⁷⁶

Whether it was her travels abroad or the death of her brother in the war, she showed a committed interest in internationalism and the avoidance of a future war in the years after 1918. Some of her early attachment to the CLNU might be considered *de facto* in that its public meetings were often chaired by the current mayor. However, her participation went beyond the functional and she served on the local branch's committee, often going out to speak to villages to recruit members and educate the public about the work of the League. Chairing a Town Hall meeting in 1922 she made her personal views clear to her audience,

if there was ever a time when the people felt in need of some wise over-guiding hand in foreign policy, it was now.... She hoped the day was very near at hand when they would have done away with Supreme Councils, meetings of Premiers and that sort of thing and that these

⁷⁴ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 27 April 1918, p.5.

⁷⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 20 March 1919, p.4. Despite this merger it is noticeable that subsequent reports of the party's activities record the women's section as providing refreshments for social gatherings, entertainments, and sales of garments.

⁷⁶ Clara served as a councillor from 1918 to her retirement in 1954. She was elected mayor five times and was member of a number of committees including the town's Education Committee.

matters which were of such tremendous importance should be dealt with by the body in her opinion best qualified to deal with it and that was the LON.⁷⁷

Clara Winterbotham also pointed out that as all great parties in the State claimed to support the Union, she, or no-one else could say to which party it belonged... and that it was free from party politics. On many occasions, she expressed a strong moral, almost evangelical commitment to the Union. She argued that 'if the public only studied the work and principles of the League, they would not hesitate to give it their whole-hearted support.' She warned that too many intelligent people formed their views having read the halfpenny papers and that the main task of the Union was to challenge this ignorance and provide 'something better.'⁷⁸ In a speech that now jars to modern ears she compared the government's traditional conduct of foreign policy with the League as like comparing a wheelchair to a Rolls Royce.

A decade later, at a retirement dinner for the branch honorary secretary and his wife – Mr and Mrs Monro Briggs - she gave a somewhat clearer description of the role of the Union in that,

it gave weight to the League of Nations and power to the Government to take its full share and responsibility in the great and increasingly difficult problems that faced the League of Nations to-day. It was, as it were, a finger upon the pulse of the nation that the Government may, in some way, be assured of the weight of things that is behind the membership of the League itself. It was from that point of view that the LNU was of such tremendous importance.⁷⁹

Her role in supporting the CLNU was important for several reasons and as an individual she brought much to the local branch. Clearly as a prominent Liberal she was able to bring a good deal of local party support for the League – particularly at a time when parliamentary Liberals were divided and

⁷⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 20 October 1922, p.4.

⁷⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 31 May 1923, p.1.

⁷⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 26 January 1934, p.7.

declining in influence. Not only did she bring Liberal support but her willingness to work alongside local Conservatives to promote the work of the Union, helped to promote its cross-party nature.⁸⁰ Her prominent role within the Education Committee over a span of many years also meant that attempts to promote LNU propaganda and distribute educational pamphlets in schools and libraries met with a willing and supportive ally. Finally, her status in the town brought the CLNU connections with various groups.

Foremost was social and familial in that she belonged to a family of local solicitors, town councillors and magistrates (she was appointed as a JP in 1921) and as such the Winterbothams were regarded as reputable figures within the town and the family name brought *kudos*.⁸¹ Second was the network of women's organisations that she brought to the CLNU. Her election as Cheltenham's first lady Mayor attracted a certain amount of attention from women's groups. On the day of her appointment to the Council, the press reported that there was,

an exceptionally large number of visitors to the Chamber and ladies were there in great force, among them being many members of the Cheltenham Women's Citizens' Association and of the local branch of the National Council of Women.⁸²

She was able to use this interest to promote the ideas and work of the League amongst the town's women.⁸³ Despite their eventual differences, in the 1920s she worked closely with the Rev. Barbara Thomas (vice-president of the Cheltenham Liberal Association in 1926). Together they were able to raise questions on the prevention of war and disarmament that elected politicians of the day would

⁸⁰ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 26 February 1921, p.2. Reported that there was an interesting meeting at Hatherley Lane schools at which Councillor Clara Winterbotham and Mr. Monro Briggs were the speakers.

⁸¹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 13 March 1926, p.13. Her father John is described as 'one of the most prominent and influential men in the political and municipal life of the borough, of which his eloquence made him the recognised public orator upon occasions of civic importance.'

⁸² *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 12 November 1921, p.4.

⁸³ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 31 December 1921, p.8. 'A Woman's Point of View: we in Cheltenham are to be congratulated not only on the election of a lady Mayor, but the indisputable fact that in placing Councillor Clara Winterbotham at the head of the Corporation, Cheltenham has secured a public servant who is pre-eminently fitted for the position even if the year's record does not show great enough has happened to strengthen the justice of women's persistent claim to equality of opportunity.'

have perhaps found more difficult.⁸⁴ Lastly, it could be also argued that her own circumstances in losing her brother in the war resonated with many women who had also lost loved ones. In the years immediately following the war she campaigned to raise funds for the building and siting of the town's war memorial. Her attendance at the opening ceremony in October 1921 and the subsequent laying of a wreath in memory of her brother lent a touching immediacy and urgency to the work of those seeking to avoid future wars.

Another prominent figure in the CLNU was Daniel Lipson, its vice-chair from 1926 and then as chair from 1933 to 1944. However, as a Liberal, Lipson is a somewhat problematic figure in terms of his party allegiances. As chair of the local Liberal Association he became a Liberal Councillor and then mayor. Later he stood for the parliamentary seat as an independent and even sought entry into the Conservative party. May be aspects of his Jewish and European background and his relatively recent arrival in the town left him slightly adrift of established party loyalties, but he always justified himself as a firm supporter of the National Coalition, and in local issues regarded municipal politics as a non-party affair. As the threat of war came closer in the 1930s, he took a noticeably different stance on rearmament and the protection of the smaller nations, from other members of the CLNU.⁸⁵

However unclear his party politics, Lipson did much to promote the LNU within the borough and argued strongly for the cause of liberal internationalism and cooperation between nations. Clues to his thinking might be in his family's recent origins. Lipson's parents had moved to Britain in the 1870s. Having been born in Neustadt (part of Poland that subsequently transferred to Russia) they became naturalized British citizens in 1915.⁸⁶ There is no direct evidence to suggest that they migrated because of pogroms, but it cannot be ruled out as a possibility at this time. Lipson's father set up a

⁸⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 9 June 1927, p.4. Both women attended a conference held by National Council for Prevention of War which passed the motion calling on the Government to take a strong lead in proposing radical reduction in armaments at the forthcoming Geneva Disarmament Conference.

⁸⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 21 February 1935, p.6. Lipson and Rev. Thomas took opposing sides in a public debate over the need for an international police force. Throughout 1938 they exchanged letters in the press arguing over the League's response to disarmament and the Czechoslovakian crisis.

⁸⁶ ancestry.co.uk. Naturalization Certificates issued 14 September 1915. Date accessed: 30/9/2023

furniture business in Sheffield and became active in the local Jewish community. Despite the business going bankrupt in 1905 both Lipson and his brother were educated in the local grammar school and went on to take up places at Cambridge.⁸⁷ Lipson subsequently matriculated from Corpus Christi with a 2: I in the Classical Tripos in 1908. There was little record of Lipson's time at Corpus apart from that he was a founding member of a Classics Society of which he later became president.⁸⁸ However, whilst in Sheffield he is recorded as having attended a debate by the Hebrew Literary Society on the Russian Polish Jew.⁸⁹ The following year, also in his hometown, he gave an address to the YMCA's mock parliament.⁹⁰

After Cambridge, Lipson embarked on a teaching career that eventually brought him to Cheltenham College in 1914, via Portsmouth and Brighton. The first evidence of his interest in internationalism was in 1917 when he attended a talk given by Mr. A. Greenwood from the Council for the Study of International Relations. The event was held at the College and as part of his address, Mr. Greenwood remarked that 'they were all internationalists in the sense that they believed peace and harmony to be better than war and discord.'⁹¹ The report of the debate mentions that Lipson spoke but unfortunately does not tell us what he said. Two years later Lipson gave his own address to the North Gloucestershire Branch of the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools in which he spoke of the need to have better education after the war, and he quoted President Wilson's words that 'the Allies were fighting to make the world safe for Democracy but urged that there was no safety for an uneducated Democracy. We must, therefore, educate our masters.'⁹²

Lipson's first engagement with the LNU came in 1920 when, at its meeting held at the local grammar school, he gave a vigorous address on the objects of the League, appealed to the members

⁸⁷ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 25 January 1905, p.10. Lipson was awarded a scholarship of £30.

⁸⁸ Corpus Christi College Archive, Cambridge: GBR/0268/CCCC/Pub/1/2 *The Benedict* (college magazine) and information supplied by College Archivist.

⁸⁹ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 17 October 1904, p.5.

⁹⁰ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 22 March 1906, p.4.

⁹¹ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 4 December 1915, p.7.

⁹² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 20 November 1917, p.3.

upon 'the need for increasing its numbers and urged Governments of the Allies to lose no time giving the League the necessary authority to promote the peace of the world' – particularly in relation to what was happening in Poland.⁹³ Lipson's concern for his native country was also expressed through his support for the town's Save the Children Fund to which he contributed 10 guineas and his membership of its Famine Fund Committee.⁹⁴ In November 1921 Lipson, as an Independent Liberal, spoke with great eloquence (according to the newspaper) to the local Liberal Association, of which he was now a member, on the Washington Conference and the need to reduce armaments in all nations.⁹⁵ A brief minute in the Liberal Association minute book records Lipson chaired a meeting on the 'Future of Liberalism' and the party's support for the LON.⁹⁶ Lipson was also instrumental in the setting up in 1925 of a Gloucestershire District Council for the local branches of the LNU.⁹⁷

In the meantime, Lipson's employment with Cheltenham College had ended in 1923 when he set up and headed his own Jewish school, Corinth House. He also began his entry into municipal and County Council politics, which eventually resulted in him being elected as mayor for the borough in 1935 and then as the town's MP in 1937. The rise in Lipson's political fortunes was not mirrored at all by the state of the local party. The minute books that have survived from the early thirties suggest a continued struggle to raise funds and members and persuade a suitable candidate to stand for the borough. Lipson could have provided them with their answer had he not begun his drift to the Conservatives – albeit an Independent one, at this stage. In his election address to the borough in 1937 Lipson mentioned his chairmanship of the League of Nation Union, as a point of endorsement

⁹³ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 15 May 1920, p.2.

⁹⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 December 1919, p.4. *Gloucestershire Echo*, 2 October 1920, p.5, contains a report about growing concerns for famine and typhus in Poland as a result of the war in Russia. Lipson joined Cheltenham's SCF Famine Fund Committee.

⁹⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 30 November 1921, p.3.

⁹⁶ Gloucestershire Archives: D15946/1. Minute Book of the Cheltenham Liberal Association, March 1925.

⁹⁷ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 14 November 1925, p.6.

with the voters. However, as a supporter of Chamberlain and the National Government he also announced that,

The Government's decision to re-arm is, in my opinion, inevitable under the circumstances now existing, to enable the Nation to carry out its obligations, but it will be my earnest effort to assist the Government in anything they may do to persuade other nations to join with them in an all-round reduction of expenditure on armaments.⁹⁸

And a year later,

In pursuing her policy of peace, however, Great Britain must be strong, for the sake of her own people; for the ideals of freedom and liberty, of which she was the world's greatest champion; because of her Empire; because of the obligations she had entered under the Covenant of the League, and to carry out her policy of peaceful appeasement. "She must be strong in armaments," said Mr. Lipson, "but strong, also, in moral purpose and moral strength of character."⁹⁹

Such tempered support for a key League of Nations policy increasingly brought him into conflict with some of the more radically minded pacifists of the local branch – not least the Rev. Barbara Thomas. Rev. Thomas spoke out for a robust defence of Czechoslovakia in 1938 as it became subject to German aggression.¹⁰⁰ By now Lipson was a firm supporter of appeasement – arguing that an armed response to Hitler would have not only brought about the destruction of the Czech state but war in Europe.¹⁰¹ Such a stance brought Lipson criticism – not least from Mr. George Baird the Labour candidate,

⁹⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 7 June 1937, p.4.

⁹⁹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 2 April 1938, p.4.

¹⁰⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 17 December 1938, p.4. In a letter to the Editor she describes Czechoslovakia's losses under the Munich Agreement (coal, land, population) as 'crippling'.

¹⁰¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 19 December 1938, p.4.

From what I have read of him he is a very good disciple of Neville Chamberlain —a very good disciple of the man who talks about non-intervention and at the same time knows there is intervention on behalf of Franco in Spain. He is a good disciple of the man who told Czecho-Slovakia he would live up to his obligations and a short time later betrayed those obligations.¹⁰²

Likewise, a public debate between Lipson and Mr. H. Wickham Steed (an eminent journalist) in which the former attempted to defend the government's position of appeasement provoked the following correspondence,

No, those of us who not only criticise the Government's foreign policy but dread it, are not "war-minded." We are far more "peace-minded" than Mr. Chamberlain. He hopes for peace in his time. We want peace for our children as ourselves, and we do not believe peace will come by throwing friendly democracies to the wolves and by giving free rein to the totalitarian states with all their accompanying beastliness, sadism, and hatred of personal freedom.¹⁰³

The following year, the *Echo* delivered its own judgment in an editorial on the League with this reflection,

If the League broke down because nations were not ready to put their trust in it, it is equally certain that the smaller nations of Europe are not prepared to risk their security by a too eager welcome to the overtures from Britain and France.¹⁰⁴

This in turn prompted another Labour attack on Lipson,

¹⁰² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 December 1938, p.10.

¹⁰³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 7 March 1939, p.4.

¹⁰⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 21 April 1939, p.4.

Perhaps Mr. Lipson considers that the local personalities are more important than questions of peace and war.¹⁰⁵

In defence of his actions, Lipson gave a spirited speech celebrating what the League had achieved. He argued that it was doing work of foremost importance and not least in educating the people in world affairs. ‘The position was very different from that of 1914 and whether rightly or wrongly people thought a good deal more about foreign affairs than they had done before the war.’

Demonstrating this, Lipson spoke at length and with knowledge to his audience, about the situation in Eastern Europe and the need to preserve an alliance with Russia.¹⁰⁶

During the war years Lipson worked hard to keep the local branch at the forefront of things – not least with lectures and a Brains Trust. Much of their debate was on the need to form a lasting and effective peace once the war ended. There was an acceptance that the structures of the League had failed – or at least were not given a chance to succeed – but a renewed optimism was given to the forming of a new instrument for peace – the United Nations Association. In 1946, the local branch of the LNU held its final meeting and took the decision to form a branch of the United Nations Association with Lipson as its chair.¹⁰⁷

Lipson’s contribution to the CLNU is a problematic one, particularly in terms of his ‘Liberalism.’¹⁰⁸ He undoubtedly brought much drive and energy to the branch and on many occasions demonstrated a good knowledge of world affairs and that he could speak with understanding on matters of foreign policy. However, he could also be divisive. For most of the 1920s the Liberals had been intent on finding a suitable Asquithian candidate for the borough but with little success and with modest interest in the League. Lipson was undoubtedly a popular local figure whose work as a town

¹⁰⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 May 1939, p.6.

¹⁰⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 May 1939, p.3.

¹⁰⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 6 February 1946, p.4.

¹⁰⁸ For general surveys of the Liberal Party see: Adelman, P., *The Liberal Party in Decline* (London, 1995); Dangerfield, G., *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (New York, 1935); Morgan, K., *The Age of Lloyd George: The Liberal Party and British Politics, 1890–1929* (New York, 1971 reprinted 2021).

councillor had brought much support and who was a prominent advocate of the League. However, his subsequent drift towards the Conservatives and his open declaration for support for Chamberlain could hardly associate his leadership of the branch with the Liberals. Likewise, his support for rearmament and appeasement brought him into conflict with other prominent supporters of the local branch – not least the Rev. Thomas. Perhaps his most significant contribution, albeit as an Independent, is that he kept the local branch tight and functioning during the war years (when many others had folded) and brought its work forward into the UNA – thereby ensuring that the tradition and work of the CLNU as a peace movement was given a degree of continuity into the post-war years.

Despite weakness and division within the party nationally, Cheltenham's Liberals (of either persuasion) made up a significant core of local branch LNU support, and indeed its leadership – Winterbotham, Lipson, Jordan, Bush, and Skelton were all prominent names within the CLNU. The Liberal Association's minute book for the 1920s shows that they were alive to foreign matters and regarded the League as the best instrument to deal with them.¹⁰⁹ After 1925, Liberal candidates for the borough's seat all made favourable references in their election addresses to the League and its work.¹¹⁰ Liberal support brought *kudos*, knowledge, expertise and energy to the work of the local branch but could, as with Lipson, also be problematic in that it reflected both national and local divisions within the party. These divisions led to internal conflicts over matters such as rearmament and appeasement within the branch, and criticism for it from without.

c. Labour

Cheltenham's Labour Party came into being in August 1918 when a company of eighty, 'of very enthusiastic temperament,' met at the Oddfellows' Hall to elect a provisional committee to form a

¹⁰⁹ Gloucestershire Archives: D15946/1. Minute Book of Cheltenham Liberal Association.

¹¹⁰ Gloucestershire Archives: PR3.1 Cheltenham Parliamentary Elections 1928, 1929, 1931. The 1928 address by Sir John Rutter (Liberal candidate) stated, 'For many years I have worked for the League of Nations Union, a body which exists to forward the ideals for which the LON was formed.'

local branch. The principal speaker at the meeting was a Mr. Thomas Mann who announced that ‘although Cheltenham was looked upon as an educational centre and a pleasure resort, he hoped the time was not far distant when Labour would be represented not only on all the local public offices, but on the floor of the House of Commons.’¹¹¹ However, unlike its neighbours Stroud and Gloucester, Cheltenham was relatively slow off the mark in putting forward a candidate in parliamentary elections.

It was not until the 1928 by-election, brought about by the death of Sir James Agg-Gardner, that Miss Florence Widdowson, a Wolverhampton school teacher, stood as the town’s first Labour candidate. In a three-cornered contest with Conservatives and Liberals, Labour came third.¹¹² In the general election the following year the party was represented by Mr. Pigott from Hereford who again polled third in the contest.¹¹³ Likewise in the 1937 election Labour polled third place again – this time behind Lipson standing as an Independent and supporter of the coalition.¹¹⁴ The challenge of ever obtaining a Labour victory was best expressed by Mr. Pigott who when defeated in 1929 asked his supporters to continue to work together inside the local party ‘to find the weak spots in their ranks and strengthen them, to support the officials, to attend meetings and to make a persistent attack upon this citadel of Capitalism’.¹¹⁵ Whereas the Liberal and Conservative candidates were often from the town’s established families, Labour’s candidates in the interwar years were brought in from outside the town. Lacking familial, social, and professional connections they experienced a degree of isolation from its established society.

¹¹¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 26 August 1918, p.3.

¹¹² 1928 Cheltenham by-election results: Sir Walter Preston (C.) 10,438; Sir John Brunner (L.) 6,678; Miss F. B. Widdowson (Lab.) 3,963. Conservative majority 3760.

¹¹³ 1929 general election results: Preston (C.) 15,279; Raffety (Lib.) 8,533; Pigott (Soc.) 4,920. Conservative majority 6,746.

¹¹⁴ 1937 general election result: Mr. D. L. Lipson (Conservative candidate supporting the National Government) 10,533; Lt.-Col. R. Tristram Harper (official Conservative and National Government candidate) 10,194; Mr. Cecil C. Poole (Labour) 5,570. Conservative majority 339.

¹¹⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 31 May 1929.

Despite its lack of Parliamentary success, the local party demonstrated a good effort to establish its presence in the town – including weekly meetings and whist drives. Such a presence should have made it an effective and supportive ally of the CLNU. The national Labour Party with the backing of the Trades Union Congress had passed a nine-point resolution in 1919 to support the League of Nations as a valuable ally in the cause of peace,

The more powerfully Labour supports and is represented in the League of Nations, the more can each help the other. We need both the League of Nations and the Labour Internationale. They are not rivals, but friends working in coordinated endeavour towards the same goal — Peace.¹¹⁶

The local group also passed its own resolution,

The Cheltenham Labour Party endorses President Wilson's policy of the League of Peoples, regards the Fourteen Points as the indispensable basis of a democratic peace, and assures him of its unfaltering support in his opposition to militarist and imperialist sentiment and in his fight for permanent peace that shall embody the principles of justice.¹¹⁷

However, at grassroots, Labour activists and trade unions often lacked enthusiasm for the League. Not only did they regard it as a distraction from the business of strengthening their own party, but they were not keen to cooperate with an organisation that they regarded as middle-class.¹¹⁸ Certainly, when the names of the various political party members are compared with the CLNU membership and committee, relatively few are members of the Labour group. Mr. George Blagg, the treasurer of the newly formed local Labour branch, was the only one to have a direct connection with the CLNU.

¹¹⁶ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 November 1919, p.4. The 'Internationale' was set up to bring together workers of different countries in order to bring pressure to bear on their Governments and force them to yield to the opinion of the working classes organised in favour of peace.

¹¹⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 7 January 1919, p.4.

¹¹⁸ McCarthy, *The British People*, pp.65-6. References Steel-Maitland correspondence to Cecil: 9 December 1926 in which he complains that 'the Labour people will not properly co-operate with the Union because they do not like working in any organization which does not belong to them.'

From 1926 he served as a committee member and was active in giving talks in the villages. Aside from these duties, he also served as a JP and was a member of the Education Committee – something which might have brought him into closer contact with CLNU officials than other members of his Labour Party.

However, as well as being an ally of the League, the local Labour group could also be its critic. In splitting with the coalition government in 1919, Labour had lost the chance to send its own representatives to the Peace Conference and had not secured the voice it had hoped for. Labour's opposing views became evident when George Blagg wrote to the Editor of the *Echo* criticizing the League's support for armed intervention against Russia on behalf of Poland,

The chief function of the League of Nations is the prevention of war by understanding, not to wait until war is in progress and then use armed intervention to end it... Why did members of the League of Nations ignore Articles 11 and 17 of the Covenant? Since the League of Nations has failed to act in this, its first opportunity—a real test case – has it failed forever?¹¹⁹

Despite criticisms of some League actions, the Labour Party and its local candidates remained firm supporters of the cause of peace. During the 1928 by-election Florence Widdowson declared herself a 'pacifist'.¹²⁰ When visited by the Women's Peace Crusade's delegation with their five questions, Walter Piggott agreed with all their points (as did his Liberal opponent) and said he had joined the party on 'the peace issue.'¹²¹ In his election leaflet for May 1929, he stated 'I believe war is a folly that can never justify its cost in life, limb and money'.¹²² In November 1935, Mrs Pakenham, a peace campaigner and the town's Labour candidate, caused a stir by preaching to a large congregation at

¹¹⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 August 1920, p.3.

¹²⁰ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 15 September 1928, p.9.

¹²¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 24 May 1929, p.1.

¹²² Gloucestershire Archives: PR 3.1. Cheltenham Parliamentary Elections 1928, 1929, 1931.

Barbara Thomas' Bayshill Church. Taking as her theme words from Jeremiah 6 (Peace, peace, they say, when there is no peace) she warned that,

in the first years after the war people had kept Armistice Day with remembrance for the fallen mingled with thankfulness and hope that now at last, we might construct a warless world, but now, though remembrance is still held, anxiety and fear were coupled with it in place of hope, and we were back in a state of mind like that of 1914.¹²³

Although not the Labour Party as such, within its sister organization the Cheltenham and District Trade Council (CDTC), Brother Paget (Order of Foresters) delivered a series of reports on the International Peace Conference and disarmament. The CDTC followed up with a letter to the Education Committee desiring that Peace Day should be boosted instead of Empire Day.¹²⁴

Despite a declared support for peace, there was little connection between the local Labour Party and the CLNU. Some of Cheltenham's Labour supporters may not have felt at home with middle-class Liberals and Conservatives. For them the cause for world peace could be pursued by other means. From others there was direct criticism of the League. In 1936, George Blagg's complaint that the League had not done enough to protect Russia from Polish aggression, was mirrored by Barbara Thomas, an ardent Labour supporter, protesting it had failed to impose stricter oil sanctions on Italy over Abyssinia.¹²⁵ In the following year she referred 'to the sense of shame we all had at the failure of the League of Nations, shared by some members of the Government and the people of this country'.¹²⁶

Rev. Thomas scorned Daniel Lipson (chair of the CLNU) for supporting appeasement of German aggression over Czechoslovakia,

¹²³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 November 1935, p.6.

¹²⁴ Gloucestershire Archives: D3614/7/286/1/M325. CDTC minute book No. 6 1931-1935.

¹²⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 31 January 1936, p.1.

¹²⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 18 March 1937, p.6.

Mr. Lipson values the "guarantee" of the Great Powers very highly if he believes it outweighs to Czecho-Slovakia her grievous losses, one of the worst of which is her loss of faith in the Western democracies.¹²⁷

She was not alone in her views and they reflected an increasing sense among some Labour supporters that, although the League held high principles, it effectively lacked teeth. In a sermon delivered in 1940 she stated,

she did not seek to minimise the extent in which the League had failed in its main objective—the preservation of peace.¹²⁸

Her view now was that something different was needed and she supported the newly established Federal Union of democratic states.¹²⁹ Whereas before the war she had been a staunch pacifist, she had now changed her belief, realising that a strong international police force must be used in aiding the defenceless and protecting the weak against a power that was evil.

Summary

In its early years, the CLNU attempted to model a clear non-party stance. Town councillors and prospective parliamentary candidates stood side by side on meeting platforms and showed willing to serve alongside each other on the branch's committee. It could be argued that the presence of the Labour party was less conspicuous than the other two parties but then it was of recent origin in the borough. As well as representatives from the Liberal and Conservative associations, the town's corporate bodies also reaffirmed the LNU's non-party status – whether in promoting its literature in the library, endorsing its essay competitions in schools or in sponsoring its films at the local cinema.

¹²⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 17 December 1938, p.4.

¹²⁸ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 13 April 1940, p.4.

¹²⁹ Bosco, A. 'Lothian, Curtis, Kimber and the Federal Union Movement (1938-40)', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 23(3) (1998), pp. 465–502. See also *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 July 1939, p.7. The Bayshill Unitarian Church Women's League was entertained on Monday afternoon with a very informal chat which dealt with various subjects arising chiefly from letters received. One suggested the solution of international tension by a "Federated States of Europe," thus agreeing with the newly started Federal Union society.

Even with something as potentially divisive as the National Ballot of 1934, all three parties in Cheltenham declared their support. They all helped with the distribution and collection of ballot papers, asserting that ‘this ballot is absolutely non-party in character’.¹³⁰ Likewise, at a peace meeting held in 1935 attended by all three parties, the Conservative and Labour parliamentary candidates and the Liberal town mayor (by this time there was no Liberal candidate standing) all declared that,

The League of Nations Union was a non-party organisation because it drew its supporters from the members of all the three great political parties in the country. The two candidates who were asking for the votes of the electors in this constituency were both strong supporters of the League of Nations it would be incredible for any political party to put forward a candidate who was not a supporter of the League.¹³¹

However, below the surface, cracks and divisions were appearing, particularly as the branch moved into the 1930s. The disquiet that many felt about the course of the civil war in Spain, and the actions of the dictators in Italy, Germany, and Japan led to calls for a greater level of response from the League of Nations and for the British government to give it more support. The Conservative Party increasingly disassociated itself from a committed support of the League and the notion of Collective Security, arguing instead that the British government was best placed to determine how it should respond to the events. Conservative candidates standing for the borough frequently put the view that they were not prepared to discuss the League at the hustings. The furthest they drifted from the ideals of the League was in their support for Chamberlain and appeasement. As a result, the CLNU was often left in the hands of the Liberals – particularly Daniel Lipson, its chair. This in turn saw its Labour supporters become more vocal in their criticism of what they regarded as the League’s inaction, such as its failure to impose sanctions on first Italy, then Spain and finally Japan. Much of

¹³⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 8 December 1934, p.4.

¹³¹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 9 November 1935, p.5.

this criticism was voiced by the Rev. Barbara Thomas who clashed several times publicly with Lipson over appeasement and what she regarded as the abandonment of Czechoslovakia. Likewise, John Beard, the Labour candidate in 1939, delivered a very public critical judgement of Lipson for what he regarded as a lack of clarity and consistency,

it seemed to me at least that Mr. Lipson liked to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds on home policy — he and his leader want to adopt that practice in foreign policy also.¹³²

Labour showed increasingly less faith in the League, regarding institutions such as the Internationale as a better means to secure peace. In turn, Liberals who supported the national government of Chamberlain accused the Labour Party of putting peace at risk by demanding action against Germany. CLNU member, Dorothea Jordan (also a staunch member of Cheltenham's Liberal Association) in a letter to the *Echo* warned, 'The headquarters of the Labour Party are imperilling both the true interests of this country and the peace of the world'.¹³³

The branch attempted to put on a brave face, and in the 1939 CLNU Annual Report, it wrote that 'it is very gratifying to report that so many of our members have not lost faith in the ultimate success of the League principles.'¹³⁴ It prided itself that, unlike a number of other local branches, it had managed to keep itself in existence and to an extent, flourishing.¹³⁵ However, it had failed to mobilise any real support within the town against the outbreak of war. Such views were more likely to be voiced by the Women's Peace League or by individuals who had drifted away from the CLNU. Regarding war with a certain inevitability, it instead turned itself to the task of building a more secure world once war had ended.¹³⁶

¹³² *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 13 May 1939, p.3.

¹³³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 March 1938, p.4.

¹³⁴ Gloucestershire Archives: PQ6.4GS. CLNU Annual Report for 1939.

¹³⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 July 1944, p.3. Mr Dye (chair) 'We have carried on through five difficult years while many big branches, Gloucester and Stroud in our own county, have ceased to function. Last year had been particularly difficult, but this year things were on the upgrade, and we have already collected 240 subscriptions.

¹³⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 4 July 1945, p.6. The CLNU was once again canvassing the town's parliamentary candidates of all parties on their support for a world peace organisation.

The CLNU's origin was based on a consensus of horror and revulsion at the consequences of the Great War. It is no coincidence that many of those who joined the branch in its early days had lost family members and had a determination to work for peace – as typified by the peace pageants of the 1920s and the Peace Days held in schools. Whilst there was little direct threat of war and an obvious economic need for a reduction in arms spending, interparty co-operation and support for the CLNU was relatively easy to achieve. Conservatives and Liberals cooperated within its ranks and in turn so did the town's new Labour voice. However, the twin challenge of the rise of the dictators and a world economic collapse in the late 1920s, caused party divisions to open up once again. Conservatives and Labour supporters began to detach themselves from the League, seeking other means of conducting foreign policy. The Liberals, in whose hands the LNU might have remained strong, were themselves weak and divided – what many have called a spent force.

The highly provisional state of Westminster party politics in the interwar years made cross-party co-operation and support for the LNU difficult. However, it did manage some consensus at a local level, and helped establish a broader view that international government was too valuable a policy for partisan politics and that foreign policy should be placed above party.¹³⁷ The CLNU's engagement with schools and with women's groups encouraged and enabled a greater section of the population to participate more in the debate over matters of foreign policy than ever before. Through its junior branches, its work in schools, its literature in libraries, its public meetings, films, and impromptu study groups, the CLNU made positive advances in educating the town's electorate to regard foreign policy and internationalism as matters of interest and concern for the common man (and woman).¹³⁸ Whether it be through a nine-year old's school essay, Barbara Thomas' Bayshill study group or Daniel Lipson's brains trust, there was a debate going on in the town which asked more of those

¹³⁷ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.69.

¹³⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 23 June 1939, p.3. The library reported that, as in previous years, loan collections of thirty volumes had been received quarterly from the League of Nations Union library, and 182 readers had borrowed these books.

wishing to represent it at a parliamentary level, regardless of party. Certainly, this was the view the CLNU had of itself and of its work over the last two decades,

Mr Lipson said that the League of Nations Union was doing work of great importance and not least in educating the people in world affairs. The position was very different from that of 1914 and whether rightly or wrongly people thought a good deal more about foreign affairs than they had done before the war. “The crisis of 1914 came upon the peoples of the world when they were totally unprepared because they were not taking an interest in international affairs,” he said. This is not so today and the advantage over 1914 is that people do think and have considerable knowledge.¹³⁹

A similar sentiment was expressed by the Rector (Canon Goodcliffe) in his address to a Town Hall meeting in 1940,

the most striking thing of to-day is the totally different way in which we have gone into this war compared with the way we entered the last war. I have not seen any of that false jingoism of 1914. There was too much false patriotism and imperialism in 1914. We have entered this war with dignity, and fully realising the gravity of the position. That is due to the work of the League of Nations.¹⁴⁰

Such comments may well have a self-congratulatory air about them, but the election manifestos and addresses of all party candidates in the 1930s show a distinct regard for matters of foreign policy and a recognition that it was an area of concern and interest for voters. The CLNU through its educational work (with both children and adults) put matters of foreign policy on the agenda of local politics and at a local level. With its non-party stance, the CLNU opened discussion of foreign policy

¹³⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 May 1939, p.3. Lipson’s speech at the annual meeting of the CLNU at the Town Hall.

¹⁴⁰ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 20 April 1940, p.4.

and internationalism to groups of newly enfranchised and potential voters who previously would not have had access to such discussion through traditional parliamentary associations.

Chapter 5 The CLNU: Education and Youth

This chapter demonstrates how the LNU attempted (with varying degrees of success) to promote an engagement with its aims in a range of Cheltenham schools and to what extent this work was driven by the town's LNU branch or carried forward independently by the schools themselves. It also considers how these experiences influenced the development of young people in terms of active citizenship, particularly regarding an internationalist foreign policy.

Teaching Internationalism: the work of the LNU in schools

The following words formed part of a prize-winning entry in the Cheltenham League of Nations Union's schools essay competition held in 1924, by the 14-year-old Jack Paish from Naunton Park Elementary School,

We boys cannot help the League of Nations as yet, but when we get to manhood, we shall have a vote of our own which we can use to the advantage of both ourselves and the League and it is then that we shall be helped by that noble society.¹

The youngsters had been given the title 'How the League of Nations can settle disputes between Nations without wars'. Jack's headmaster was Arthur Dye, himself a prominent member and honorary secretary of the town's LNU branch, who no doubt taught his students about the work of the LON and most likely helped them prepare their essay contributions.

Whereas the young Jack (along with many other youngsters writing in essay competitions that were held all over the country) openly demonstrated a support for the League, we can be less sure as to what extent he carried these views forward into his adult life. His naval records tell us that shortly after leaving school he joined the Royal Navy as a boy in 1926 before enlisting fully in 1928. During the war he served on HMS Jupiter, a destroyer used to hunt enemy submarines. Jack was taken

¹ Gloucestershire Archives: PB 63GS. Pamphlet of Elementary Schools' CLNU competition winners, April 1924.

prisoner when the Jupiter was sunk by the Japanese in 1942. After a long period of silence his family heard in 1944 that he was ‘doing well’ in a prisoner of war camp. At the end of the war Jack returned to the family home in Charlton Lane and lived well into his eighties. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for his ‘skill and enterprise against enemy submarines.’ Jack’s story is perhaps a cautionary reminder that despite considerable efforts made by the LNU and teachers to challenge perceptions of militarism, Empire, and nationalism in the generation of youngsters after the war, other, sometimes more potent, factors were also there to shape their views.

The priority given to educating the nation’s youth was made apparent from the very beginning of the CLNU’s development. In the early years of the 1920s much of the thinking was retrospective and largely based on the searing experience of a nation losing so many of its young in the recent war. In 1921 at its annual meeting, Sir James Agg-Gardner, the town’s MP, stressed that there was one course to which the League must look for influence, and that was to education. His reasoning was that the teachings of German professors and schools had been a main cause of the recent war in that,

The influence of education had impregnated the German mind with the ferocious principles brought into practice during the war. The teachers in the schools had taught that “frightfulness” was the only way to win the war, and that it was necessary to the nations that Germany should be the dominant power in the world. He trusted that the children of our schools might be taught that heroism was not only for the battlefield but also for the path of peace.²

When the issue of using teaching material supplied by the LNU in local schools came up for discussion in the town’s Education Committee, Captain Trye (ex-Royal Navy and a prominent Conservative in the town) expressed the hope the Committee were not going to start introducing politics into the schools or permit the publications of any political body of any complexion on the

² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 8 October 1921, p.4.

grounds that, if they did so, they would be allowing ‘every political stunt.’ Responding to his concerns, Mr Mann (honorary financial secretary of the CLNU) argued that surely there was no harm in any society trying to achieve peace or to wish that young children should be brought up in the principles of peace and think better of other people rather than fighting them. Most of the Committee supported this view and a recommendation to allow an LNU essay competition in the town’s schools was passed. Furthermore, Mr. Burrows (headmaster of the Central School) reported with satisfaction on the work presently being done in the principal schools of Cheltenham.³

In 1923, the central role of education was again reinforced and expanded by the Reverend Crossland (minister of Winchcombe’s Wesleyan Methodist Church) who targeted not just warlike leaders of foreign nations but also those of ‘our own nation who might be so inclined’. At a joint meeting of the Cheltenham and Winchcombe branches he explained to his audience that the reason the League of Nations Union was formed, was that ‘by education and information the great force of public opinion could be formed to be a check upon politicians and adventurous rulers against engaging in destructive wars’.⁴

Further examples show a broadening of this anti-war theme into more general (almost abstract) terms. In an address by Reverend Dr Flecker (Head of Dean Close School) at the town’s YMCA entitled the ‘League and Education’, he argued that,

Somehow there must be implanted into those who were growing into manhood and womanhood a love of righteousness and peace which should make war as much an anachronism as witchcraft.⁵

Despite concerns that too much LNU material might overload an already busy curriculum, the teaching profession in the town demonstrated itself to be largely sympathetic to the role it was asked

³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 June 1922, p.1. Cheltenham Education Committee.

⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 6 March 1923, p.5.

⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 February 1924, p.3.

to carry out. Co-operation was shown in 1924 by a well-attended meeting of Cheltenham teachers, jointly convened by the Cheltenham branch of the League of Nations Union and the Cheltenham Education Committee.⁶ The meeting was one of many that took place nationally which reflected a mutual support between teachers and teaching leaders and the LNU in promoting the aims and ideals of the LON.⁷ Further gestures of support made locally were demonstrated when the Education Committee in 1927 expressed a willingness to help teachers with expenses incurred when attending conferences for the provision of instruction for children on the aims and objects of the League.⁸

The observation has been made that ‘if there was one place in interwar Britain where the fact of the League’s existence was hard to miss, it was the classroom’.⁹ This was particularly so in Cheltenham’s case, not least for the abundance of educational institutions in the town. Noted as a centre of excellence for education, Cheltenham was home to three prominent private schools, namely Cheltenham College founded in 1841, Cheltenham Ladies’ College founded in 1853, and Dean Close School founded in 1886. There were also two well-established grammar schools: Pate’s Grammar School for Boys founded in 1574 and Pate’s Girls’ Grammar School founded in 1905.¹⁰ In addition, at the time of the 1933 Hadow Report¹¹ and its ensuing reorganisation, there were over twenty primary and secondary schools (both church and council) within the borough together with several schools in surrounding villages.¹² Each of these provided a potential classroom for League propaganda and teaching.

Reflecting on the continued success of the branch in 1944, Arthur Dye, (hon, secretary), paid tribute to the support given to the branch ‘by the heads of local schools and colleges’.¹³ It was certainly a

⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 February 1924, p.6.

⁷ McCarthy, *The British People*, pp.109-112.

⁸ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 4 June 1927, p.6.

⁹ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.104.

¹⁰ *Kelly’s Directory*, 1935.

¹¹ *1933 Report of The Consultative Committee on Infant and Nursery Schools*. (London: HM Stationery Office).

¹² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 24 October 1933, p.5.

¹³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 July 1944, p.3.

feature of the Union's links with education that a notable number of its officers were teachers or in some way connected with teaching. Of the fifty or so officers and committee members identified as serving in the Union between 1921 and 1945, over a third were teachers.¹⁴ So much was this the case, that the *Gloucestershire Echo* wryly referred to a branch meeting in 1926 as,

a school master's field night: the Chairman, Mr R.R. Dobson M.A. (Cheltenham Grammar School), the chief speaker, Mr R. W. Crammer M.A. (Crypt School, Gloucester), the proposer of the vote of thanks, Mr D.L. Lipson, M.A., and the seconder of it, Mr Finch, being all members of the scholastic profession'.¹⁵

Some of these were heads in their schools and their inclusion as branch vice-presidents or committee members may have been, in part, honorific but many were individuals who were active within the branch. In addition to its work with schools, with two teacher training colleges (St Paul's and St Mary's) and a technical college in the town, the Union was also able to make links with higher education and, indeed, adult learners.

The town's three private schools and the two grammar schools all hold collections of archival material which make some reference to League of Nations activities. Whilst such institutions may not always be typical of those across the country and may well be influenced by their local context, as Susannah Wright has demonstrated, there is much to be garnered from examining the micro-context of junior League of Nations Union branches within individual schools.¹⁶

Although the LNU first authorised junior branches as early as 1920 it was not until the 1930s and the lowering of the over-16 age limit that they appeared in Cheltenham's schools.¹⁷ Wright has observed that the number of references nationally to junior branches in the LNU might indicate that they were

¹⁴ Data from CLNU Membership Survey.

¹⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 17 February 1926, p.2.

¹⁶ Wright, S., 'Creating Liberal-International World Citizens; League of Nations Union Junior Branches in English Secondary Schools, 1919-1938', *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 56 no.3 (2020), pp.321-340.

¹⁷ Wright, S, 'Creating Liberal-International World Citizens' (2020), p. 326, footnote 25 for reference to LNU Education Committee Minutes.

more active in girls' schools than boys' schools.¹⁸ In Cheltenham this seems the case with both Pate's Grammar School for Girls and the Ladies' College providing several examples of LNU-related activities.

Case Studies: Separate Spheres – gender issues?¹⁹

a. Pate's Grammar School for Girls (PGSG)

At its annual meeting in 1934 the Cheltenham LNU recorded 'with gratification the growth of the junior branch at Pate's Grammar School for Girls, where, under the leadership of Miss D. M. Taylor, B.A., there are now 140 members'.²⁰ Miss Taylor was also a member of the town's Historical Association in which she served as honorary treasurer, a connection that resonates with observed links between history teaching and the work of the LNU.²¹ At PGSG with Miss Taylor was also Miss Eleanor Balinger, a member of the local LNU who gave speeches and talks on the work of the League to local village groups. Both Miss Anita Newton Miles, headmistress until 1934, and Miss Muriel M. Jennings, headmistress until 1945, served as vice-presidents for the local LNU branch. In 1934, in her annual Headmistress's speech day report, Miss Miles remarked that the school's League of Nations thrived and although this meant extra work for some members of the staff, they gave their time most willingly,

The League of Nations Union, after frivolling with sports in the summer have been serious over the Balkans and the Saar Valley this term. A parent who insists on being anonymous has kindly offered two prizes, a junior and senior, for prepared speeches at the next League of Nations Union meeting next term.²²

¹⁸ Wright, S., (2020), p.328 footnote 36.

¹⁹ Beebe, K, Davis, A and Gleadle, K., 'Space, Place and Gendered Identities: feminist history and the spatial turn', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 21:4 (September 2012), pp.523–532. The authors provide a detailed analysis of the notion of 'gendered space' including that of Heterotopias (spaces that have more layers of meaning or relationships to other places than immediately meet the eye).

²⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 April 1934, p.3.

²¹ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.106.

²² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 6 December 1934, p.8.

The school's League of Nations Society is also frequently mentioned in the school's annual magazine and in 1935 was able to report that it was progressing favourably and still had 'quite a large number of members'.²³ In 1933 a well-attended meeting, at which members showed enthusiasm and a readiness to support their views, debated the motion 'that we English people would have acted like the Germans if we had been in their position' – presumably referring to the aftermath of the war and the Treaty of Versailles – which carried 60 votes to 40. A reading of *Wings over Europe* (a three-act play written by Robert Nichols and Maurice Browne in 1928 dealing with threat of a nuclear bomb) was planned for 1936.²⁴ However, in terms of pupil participation perhaps the most significant event was in April 1938, when after the main meeting of the CLNU, girls from Pate's junior branch staged a model League Assembly meeting at Geneva,

With a faithful compliance to detail, the girls gave a most convincing display. Speaking French and German in an accent that would have deceived a native, they demonstrated how the nations of the world discuss business at Geneva. The President was Miss Yvonne Drewe and the Chief Interpreter Miss Rachael Handy. Every nation of the League was represented.

Speeches were made in English, French and German with pupils representing such figures as Viscount Cranbourne, M. Muller, M. Beranger, and M. Le Blanc and others playing the role of interpreters. Their debate concerned the plight of refugees from France, Switzerland and Poland and resulted in a grant of 200,000 Swiss francs being given to Saar refugees to settle in Paraguay.²⁵ Despite their enthusiasm, a press report rather disparagingly noted that although fifty-six girls took part,

Mr. Lipson (CLNU's chair) remarked that the meeting would have a greater appreciation of the kind of education given at Pate's Grammar School for Girls, having had a demonstration

²³ PGSG School Archive: PGSG magazines for 1933 p.32 and 1935 p.30.

²⁴ *Wings Over Europe: A Dramatic Extravaganza on a Pressing Theme*, by Robert Nichols and Maurice Browne (1928).

²⁵ PGSC School Archive: PGSC magazine for 1938 p.3.

of the pupils' mastery of language, rather than for them showing an interest and insight into the workings of the LON.²⁶

Not all the group's activities at Pate's were quite so intellectually demanding, and with more of an emphasis on fun, there were occasions after a talk that the girls would play competitive games and that Miss Taylor would provide tea.²⁷

b. Cheltenham Ladies' College

Whilst interest in the League of Nations was used at PGSG as an opportunity to boost the skills and awareness of the pupils in traditional curriculum areas such as languages, geography, and history, at the Ladies' College it was also used to develop new forms of citizenship. Even before the local branch was formed, as early as 1917 pupils at the Ladies' College were debating what democratic government was and what role education would play if a League of Nations was to be effective.²⁸ When the Guild of the Ladies' College (alumnae) met for its first biennial meeting after the end of the First World War, its president reflected on the fact that after the war the world was now a changed place, not least in the role of women,

War gave women an opportunity to prove themselves – their powers and their limitations – and it gave to men the opportunity of appreciating women as comrades and gaining an insight into their powers of work and organization, with the result that opposition was practically swept away... In these years women have known, as never before, the joys and anxieties of responsibility and administration, of organization on a very large scale. Profession after profession has been opened to them within the last few years.²⁹

²⁶ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 9 April 1938, p.5.

²⁷ PGSG magazine, 1938 p.4.

²⁸ CLC magazine, 1917 vol. 38.

²⁹ CLC magazine, 1920 vol. 41.

The meeting stressed the need to use these changes to ensure that the horrors of war were to be put behind and that new ways should be looked for to improve conditions of life – one of which was the League of Nations – and it was beholden on women, of all ages, to play a lead in this task. The LNU's educational role was being extended further here - not just to teach children of the horrors of war but to show them ways in which better lives could be achieved – both nationally and internationally.

This message was reinforced to the pupils by various visiting speakers. At the 1921 Empire Day address, Miss Constance Smith, HM Chief Inspector of Factories, endorsed the League of Nations in the following terms,

one sometimes hears it said, [*the League*] is a beautiful ideal, but too unpractical to work.

Now I deny that altogether. The principles of averting war and having open dealings between nation and nation – the only way of removing suspicion and distrust which of all things lead most easily to war, and of upholding international engagements – surely these are very practical things indeed. It was just because these rules were not followed, because the practices of the whole world were different, that such a war as the Great War which closed in 1918 was possible.³⁰

Miss Smith explained to the girls how the League dealt with disputes with members submitting their quarrels to the Council or Court of Arbitration and then agreeing not to take any further action for three months, giving time 'for excitement to die down, for people to reason with themselves, and altogether to count up the cost'. She gave an example of her own experience where, in Geneva, as an adviser to the British Government, she sat with delegates from thirty-nine countries for five weeks. Not only did they get closer to and better understand each other but they were able to carry out much-needed 'practical work' in helping combat typhus, plague, and other diseases. Such views of

³⁰ CLC magazine, 1921 vol. 42.

the League moved away from seeing it in purely institutional form but also in terms of its values and aspirations which could be used to shape a new internationalism. However, her example perhaps unwittingly picks up on the perception that women often suffered from a tokenism within the LNU that saw their roles constrained to mainly social and humanitarian issues on which they could give a feminine point of view.³¹

Miss Smith was not the only speaker the girls heard endorse the work of the League of Nations. In 1925, Dr Cyril Norwood, Head of Marlborough College, gave an address entitled 'The Empire and the League of Nations, their real meanings and ideals.' He emphasised the notion of civic or religious duty because,

The true Christian will love his country intensely just because it has this special service to render, and at the same time will recognise that other countries have their contribution to bring. That is the ideal and meaning of the League of Nations... the highest English patriotism, the truest Imperialism to-day is to support that cause and those ideals for which the League of Nations stands, for we can do more than any other country on its behalf.³²

This view of the League with its emphasis on nationalism, patriotic duty and leadership was often found in boys' public schools, but here it also found some acceptance within the Ladies' College.

In an Empire Day address to the College in 1928, Mr. R. B. Mowat (historian and a fellow of Corpus Christi College Oxford) encouraged pupils to give a personal sense of commitment to the ideals of the League. Stressing the need for them to show a sense of civic duty and to get behind peace proposals if they were ever going to prove effective, he warned that,

we are far too apt to fold our hands and leave these things to our statesmen. Statesmen and politicians are merely the agents of society. They are absolutely powerless without the

³¹ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.193.

³² CLC magazine, 1925 vol. 46.

impulsion of the ordinary citizen, and the proper conduct of the world's affairs depends exclusively upon the state of opinion in this country.³³

However, despite such addresses and appeals for an active citizenship in international affairs it was not until 1934 – which no doubt coincides with the lowering of the age limit for the Union – that the pupils played a more direct role. This process was reinforced by various connections between the Ladies' College and the League at both national and local level. One such was the preacher and leading pacifist, Maude Royden, who had been a pupil at the Ladies' College from 1893-96 and who addressed an early meeting of the CLNU in the Town Hall in 1920 where she had spoken to a large audience with a 'burning eloquence' on the work of the League.³⁴ Another was Miss Margaret Evelyn Popham, the newly appointed Head in 1936, and a committee member for Training of Women for Citizenship Overseas and a vice-president of the CLNU branch.

Even in the early 1920s there are examples of former pupils forging their own connections with the LNU. The 1922 college magazine reported on Fenella Crombie, an Old Girl who was working in the Secretariat of the League of Nations Union. In 1931 it recorded the death of Mrs. Hall (Annie Johnson-Brown), who during the last years of her life had 'worked hard for the League of Nations Union'. Little more is known about the work of Annie (other than the school describing her as a poetess), but Fenella became a lifelong proponent of the League of Nations. She served as a committee member and then, in 1938, as the honorary secretary of her Aberdeen branch of the LNU. Fenella is perhaps best known for her pioneering work in family planning. When she died in 1949 the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* honoured her as one of Aberdeen's best-known social workers who had devoted herself to such work for almost thirty years and whose association with public movements made her name a familiar one throughout the Northeast of Scotland.³⁵

³³ CLC magazine, 1928 vol. 49.

³⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 30 September 1920, p.3.

³⁵ *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 22 October 1949, p.6.

In terms of LNU activities recorded within CLC, the first was in 1934 when St Helen's boarding house reported it had been a busy year,

Our House societies have been very active, and we have formed a Junior Branch of the League of Nations' Union, which has held many interesting meetings. One of these took the form of a political pageant; at another, talks on foreign countries were illustrated by the Epidiascope, which was borrowed from the College for the occasion and kindly worked for us by Miss Ryan (Head of Physics). Other activities for the year included: the House play - Bernard Shaw's *Passion, Poison and Petrification* - which was well received by College and a 'most interesting expedition to Bournville on one of our free Saturdays'.³⁶

Interest in the League and its activities does seem to be a sustained and active one amongst the girls at St Helen's boarding house. In 1935 they reported that 'The League of Nations branch has held meetings every term'. More significantly, the activities of this junior branch had not gone unnoticed by the town's LNU branch and that year Mr Dye (CLNU secretary), came to the school to give an illustrated lecture on Oberammergau. An indication that these lessons and activities were helping shape the pupils' outlook is given when in that same year it was reported that a past pupil, Mary Spurling, who was reading Economics at St Hilda's Oxford, a whilst there was a member of the LNU.³⁷

Interest in League and other international issues continued into 1936 with several lively meetings including 'a very animated debate' on the Italo-Abyssinian question.³⁸ To promote LON principles further within the college, the girls of St Helen's produced a League of Nations pageant to which were invited members of other Houses. The year ended with two interesting talks, one from Miss R.

³⁶ CLC magazine, 1934 vol. 55. The pupils' expectation of these visits to Bournville seems to have been largely recreational. Writing in an earlier issue of the magazine (1923) a pupil records that 'when we had thoroughly inspected and sampled the products, we were each presented at parting with a large square packet, containing, to our disappointment, three quarters of useful literature to one-quarter of chocolate.'

³⁷ CLC magazine, 1935 vol. 56. Reported that Mary Spurling (St. Hilda's) is in her first year, reading for an Economics Diploma. She belongs to the League of Nations Union and the Guide Club and is helping to run a Brownie Pack.

³⁸ CLC magazine, 1936 vol. 57.

Shaw on the Universities' Mission to Central Africa and the other from Miss Marten on the Missions to Seamen.³⁹

One of the high points for the pupils were the opportunities to attend LON summer schools in Geneva. It has been pointed out that such opportunities would be for the minority of pupils and in effect limited to the better-off.⁴⁰ However, in the case of the Ladies' College it was a 'large party' of girls who attended the League of Nations junior summer school for ten days in 1937. The party were kept busy visiting several venues and attending lectures including one by Sir Norman Angell. Interestingly, a report for the College magazine by an unnamed pupil observed that whereas some of the speakers were in favour of the League, some were not. She also admitted that 'possibly, their hearers were not able to appreciate the full meaning of all they had to say, but the total effect of the proceedings undoubtedly formed an invaluable introduction to world problems'.⁴¹ For some, these visits were not just a simple exercise in propaganda by the League but a real chance for pupils to experience a coming-together with others beyond their national boundaries. The same writer concluded that 'a good deal of inspiration can be gained from membership of a group which is intent on a common purpose.'

Further visits to Geneva by Ladies' College pupils took place in 1938 and 1939. In a detailed report for 1938 the pupils attending described the places they visited (including a walk up the glacier at Chamonix), the people they met and the life they led whilst there. Once again, the list of speakers was an impressive one,

Many distinguished people spoke to us, and we heard some very different points of view.

Senor de Madariaga, formerly Spanish Ambassador to America and France, gave us a very interesting lecture on 'Some problems of Sovereignty.' Several members of the I.L.O. and the

³⁹ CLC magazine, 1936 vol. 57.

⁴⁰ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.114. Wright, S., (2020), p.338.

⁴¹ CLC magazine, 1937 vol. 58.

League Secretariat also visited us, including Mr. K. Zilliacus, Dr. Max Habicht and Mr. Duncan Hall. Two lectures, which formed a great contrast, were given on the same day, the first by Dr. Jentsch, a Nazi sympathiser, on Germany's Foreign Policy, and the second by the Geneva Correspondent of the Manchester Guardian, on British Foreign Policy.⁴²

The pupils made the observation that,

It was very noticeable that no attempt was made to fill us with League propaganda; indeed, several speakers had no belief in the League of Nations, yet to visit Geneva is inevitably to be influenced by the spirit of the League, and I think few of us left without the feeling that it is still living.⁴³

Unsurprisingly, given the international situation, a last visit to Geneva was made in 1939 by a small party from the College, with a much larger party touring Canada instead. There is no report of the Geneva tour, but we are told that because of the onset of war some girls got stuck in Montreal and had to continue their education there. At this point any reference to a junior branch of the LNU at the College ceases and one can imagine with other distractions going on, it may well have folded – it would have been difficult to proceed with any sense of optimism at that time. Some of this is perhaps reflected in the Head's speech to the school in 1943,

The League of Nations failed in its main object although it succeeded in many important ones and is still at this moment functioning usefully. It failed in its main object of preventing war on a large scale. There were faults in the machine from which we have learnt a lot, but fundamentally the fault was not in the machine but in the spirit behind it.⁴⁴

It is clear that for a time, an interested and vibrant junior branch of the LNU functioned at the Ladies' College. It gave pupils real opportunities to engage with notions of international citizenship,

⁴² CLC magazine, 1938 vol. 59.

⁴³ CLC magazine, 1938 vol. 59. Report by Elspeth Brown, Peggy Harper and Mary Lewis (Upper College).

⁴⁴ CLC magazine, 1943 vol. 64.

which for a few led to direct participation in the structures of the League of Nations. The tone of this local context was very much struck during the principalship of Miss Popham (1937-1953). Building on foundations established by the first and second principals (Miss Beale and Miss Faithfull), under Miss Popham's guidance the College developed its own citizenship course, in part based on history, economics, civics and languages but also including more practical elements such as factory visits, attending meetings at the Town Council and helping at baby clinics. Alongside a Guide Company, a Cadet force, first aid and nursing courses, the junior branch of the LNU helped form a core of experiential activities for the pupils in practical good citizenship. Over two hundred attended a Youth Fellowship Service in Gloucester Cathedral in 1938, with smaller, but significant numbers attending League of Nations' Summer Schools at Geneva in the late 1930s.⁴⁵ Such evidence would support Susannah Wright's conclusion from her case studies that despite being prone to constraints of local factors and local context, it is illuminating in the way they shed light on how junior branches 'functioned as enclaves of liberal internationalism'.⁴⁶

In contrast to Pate's Grammar School for Girls (a day school), there was relatively little cross-over between CLC's staff and the town's adult branch. An exception was the vice-principal, Miss Elizabeth Guinness, who sat on the CLNU committee in the early 1920s and spoke at many of its meetings. After leaving the College in 1924 (well before the founding of its junior branch), Miss Guinness worked for the League of Nations in Canterbury and London before spending some time in the USA during the Second World War.⁴⁷ A reason for the relatively low level of involvement of College staff may have been that the demands of teaching in a boarding school made it difficult for them to be fully active in the wider community.

⁴⁵ Clarke, A.K., *A History of Cheltenham Ladies' College* (Suffolk, 1972), p.116.

⁴⁶ Wright, S., (2020), p.338.

⁴⁷ Clarke, A.K., *A History of Cheltenham Ladies' College* (Suffolk, 1972), p.202; and CLC magazine, new series No. 60, 1960, p.100. Contains an obituary for Miss Guinness.

c. Cheltenham Gentlemen's College

Cheltenham (Gentlemen's) College staff showed a greater level of engagement with the CLNU in that three of its members were very prominent and active within the local branch. The most evident was Daniel Lipson (housemaster at the College) who served as a vice-chair and then chair of the CLNU. Stuart Bond, a maths teacher at the College, served on the branch's committee and was also secretary of the Gloucestershire District Council of the LNU. Graeme Montagu Paterson, also a maths teacher, served on the committee of the local branch. All three were frequent speakers at CLNU meetings and leading promoters of its work.

With three such individuals within an institution it might be thought that the College (like its sister school) would have had an active junior branch. If this were so, then it gets scant mention in the College's magazine, *The Cheltonian*. In 1921 the first division listened to a talk by a Mr C. K. Webster, who was a professor of international politics at the University of Wales and recently appointed as secretary of the British military delegation at the Geneva Conference. The professor talked at some length on the situation in Poland and Germany and on the structure of the League and the pupils asked a number of questions. Their interest seems to have picked up most when the Speaker was questioned on the recent policing role of the British army in Baku. A cheer went up from the audience when they heard that 15,000 armed and rebellious Turks and Bolsheviks had been kept in order by 'Tommies' [a slang term for British soldiers of the First and Second World Wars] placed at every crossroads and who were able, within twenty-four hours, to ensure 'that the traffic flowed smoothly as that of any of our English towns'. The speaker then ended his address on what was a ringing endorsement more for the Empire than for the League, stating that because Britain was in a unique position with its Empire being a link between east and west, 'peace cannot be brought about without us (more cheers)'.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ *Cheltonian*, November 1924, p.335.

Susannah Wright has observed that in schools (particularly boys') with alternative traditions – such as a military ethos based around an Officer Training Corps (OTC) or a strong culture of team games – 'if they did not clash with the LNU's aims, sat less easily alongside them'.⁴⁹ The existence and role of OTCs was debated several times in the LNU's Education Committee with various branches bringing forward demands that membership of OTCs should not be compulsory in the schools where it existed. Concerns expressed were that not only did OTCs foster a militarism amongst young boys but in some cases, generals on inspection visits had made disparaging remarks about the LNU.⁵⁰ At the College, some of this feeling was revealed in a letter Stuart Bond (a teacher at the College and a prominent member of the CLNU) wrote to his Head announcing his retirement. He claimed that even though he had served the College loyally for many years, due to the beliefs he held, namely, 'the wrongness of the OTC' – he was unable 'to feel 100% College' and could 'hardly see myself selling College'.⁵¹

Bond's views were not necessarily those of the LNU leadership though. The pupils' reaction to Webster's address above provides some reasoning for the approach they often took to dissociate themselves from the campaigns of pacifists and activists who wished to take a more unambiguously anti-militarist line. Aware of the views of some teachers, and of a divide amongst the wider public, Cecil, Murray and others in the LNU leadership sought to maintain a pragmatic stance by not alienating those who saw imperial and national defence as a priority over any commitment to international peace. In some cases, such conciliation towards the OTCs brought its reward. That the Head of Dean Close, Mr Bolton, made public reference to the fact that 'he saw nothing incompatible in his own membership of the League of Nations Union and his encouragement of the school contingent of the Officers' Training Corps,' suggests that conflicting ethos could be reconciled.⁵²

⁴⁹ Wright, S., (2020), p.339.

⁵⁰ LSE: LNU 2/24. LNU Education Committee minutes, 1926-30. 30 September, 1927.

⁵¹ Cheltenham College Archive: staff files. Bond's letter to the Head, 2 April 1936.

⁵² *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 20 June 1931, p.6.

However, the divisions continued and despite attacks on compulsory OTC membership from many LNU branches, it firmly remained the view of LNU leadership that this was not something they wished to pursue on the grounds that, 'a pronouncement at this time would be likely to provoke such discord as to hinder the more important work of the Union'.⁵³

In 1931 the ubiquitous Mr Whelen from LNU headquarters was invited to speak to the College's first division on the topic of 'European Affairs'. Despite the speaker's attempt to explain the role of the League in peacekeeping and referring to it as 'the one constructive idea coming from the Great War,' his visit sparked little active response from the pupils.⁵⁴

d. Dean Close School

A coolness towards the LNU can also be found at the neighbouring Dean Close School (a boys' public school founded in 1886 with a strong Evangelical tradition and ethos for sporting excellence). There is relatively little archive material available in the school from this period but a number of key events were reported in the school magazine (*The Decanian*) and the local press.

Although the school's headmaster, Mr Percy Bolton was a committee member of the CLNU there was little recorded League activity within the school itself. In 1922 senior pupils of the Literary Society debated a motion that 'The League of Nations is not worthy for support'. Despite a visit from Mr Whelen the year before in which he exhorted that 'it was the duty of all citizens to support the League',⁵⁵ the motion only passed by fifteen votes to thirteen.⁵⁶ Some attempt was made the following year to correct this with 'an extremely interesting and instructive lecture on the LON illustrated with lantern slides, to which the members of the Fifth and Sixth were invited,' but once more, little further interest in the LNU was shown.⁵⁷

⁵³ LSE: LNU 2/24. LNU Education Committee 1926-30. 1930 report into OTCs.

⁵⁴ *Cheltonian*, July 1931, p.222.

⁵⁵ *The Decanian*, 1921 issue 88.

⁵⁶ *The Decanian*, 1922 issue 92.

⁵⁷ *The Decanian*, 1923 issue 95.

Summary of Case Studies

The involvement of teachers and headmasters in the town's boys' schools should not alone be taken as evidence that LNU activities were strong there. In many cases the involvement of their staff in LNU activities took place beyond the school gate and, at times, in conflict with the school's own ideals and ethos. Daniel Lipson and Stuart Bond both split with the College – the latter expressing a strong feeling against the school's OTC as reason for his leaving. That support amongst the staff in boys' schools for the LON was low at a national level is shown in an LNU's Education Committee minute of 1930. Its report on their summer schools bemoaned the fact that OTC camps and a lack of masters to take boys to Geneva were the main reasons for a low attendance of boys.⁵⁸ Evidence from school magazines certainly suggest that staff in boys' schools participated far less in practical activities relating to the LNU than did staff in girls' schools. While discussions of foreign policy, war, geography, history, and politics all lay within a natural interest and consideration for most boys, the LNU's opposition to militarism, and in particular the OTCs, made the possibility of a conflict of interests a real one. Likewise, an ethos of games and physical activity could serve as a strong counterculture to the 'wordiness' of much LNU school-based activities.⁵⁹ In this respect, Cheltenham's boys' schools – particularly its two big public schools – supports Wright's conclusion from her own case studies that such institutions had a culture which was 'a difficult one for a junior branch to thrive in.'⁶⁰

Children's Voices

It would be wrong to dismiss interest in the LNU within the boys' College entirely. In 1921 the LNU, in co-operation with the American School Citizenship League, held an essay competition open to both American and English schools. It was announced in the local press under the banner 'an

⁵⁸ LSE: LNU 2/24. LNU Education Committee minutes 1926-30. Minutes for 1930.

⁵⁹ Hamlett, J., "'Rotten Effeminate Stuff': Patriarchy, Domesticity and Home in Victorian and Edwardian English Public Schools', *Journal of British Studies* Vol 58.1 (2019), pp.79-108. Discusses masculinity in boys' public schools.

⁶⁰ Wright, S., (2020), p.337.

honour for Cheltenham' that a Cheltenham College boy, J. H. Brown (Newick House), had been awarded the first prize with F. Baines (also Cheltenham College) highly commended. Ten years later another Cheltenham pupil, this time from the boy's Grammar School, E. R. Tucker (who later won an exhibition to read History at Jesus College Cambridge), was given first prize in a national competition held by the League. The device of an essay competition was a way the local branch sought to establish contact and influence within the town's schools. However, despite some good responses - for instance, the nearby Evesham branch held an annual competition through the 1930s attracting an entry of over 300 from seven different schools - the exercise was not without opposition. Some heads and teachers feared that it could lead to an overcrowding of the curriculum and distract from traditional subjects. Others opposed it on the grounds that it was a form of political propaganda.

In 1923 the local branch approached the Cheltenham Education Committee to seek permission to hold an essay competition for the town's elementary schools. Initially it found itself opposed by Captain Trye who argued against the request, for if political material was introduced into schools they would be turned into political battlegrounds. He wanted to,

keep political things out of the schools altogether and not encourage either teachers or children to start controversial things in the schools'.⁶¹

As it did on other occasions, the Education Committee stated that they did not view the League as political and were sympathetic to its request – some members even expressed the view that it was desirable that the League was promoting goodwill between nations. Later requests to the Education Committee saw it approve the issuing of League news sheets and the distribution of twenty-four copies of a book by Miss Innes explaining how the League operated, for reading in schools.⁶² In 1933 it was agreed that a copy of the Board of Education's pamphlet *The League of Nations and the*

⁶¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 November 1923, p.1.

⁶² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 30 March 1927, p.5.

Schools should be sent to the headteacher of each public elementary school in the committee's area.⁶³ Such cooperation between the Education Committee and the CLNU is not surprising though, given that a significant number of its members were in one way or another affiliated to the branch.

The results of the 1924 essay competition were published as a booklet containing verbatim essays which provide us with a rare example of pupil voice on LNU matters. The winners of the different classes were chosen by the two adjudicators – the Rev. W.E. Beck MA from St Paul's Teacher Training College and L.S. Wood Esq. MA (HMI and chairman of the Cheltenham Library Committee).⁶⁴ There were generally three winners in each class (boys and girls) across an age range of 13 to 15 years. In an area that is often devoid of personal testimony these essays give a valuable insight into the teaching and reception of the LNU materials in the town's schools – however, they are also problematic in some ways.

In their work on Mass Observation essays written by Bolton school children in 1937, Hester Barron and Claire Langhammer demonstrate such writing provides candid and insightful glimpses into children's emotional lives. However, they also make the point that 'accessing children's subjective understanding is no easy task.'⁶⁵ Many of the Cheltenham essays seem to offer simple paraphrases of LNU material or coached responses – hardly surprising given that they were written for a competition.⁶⁶ However, some go beyond this and show various attempts by the children to reframe their thoughts on responsible foreign policy within their own spheres of reference and understanding.

⁶³ Gloucestershire Archives: GCC/EDU/2/1/1/29. Gloucestershire Elementary Schools Management Sub-Committee minutes, April 1933 – March 1934

⁶⁴ Gloucestershire Archives: P6.63GS.

⁶⁵ Barron, H. and Langhammer, C., 'Feeling through Practice: subjectivity and emotion in children's writing', *Journal of Social History*, 51, 1 (2017) and Barron, H. and Langhammer, C., *Class of '37. Voices from Working-Class Girlhood* (Metro, 2021). Also giving helpful advice is: McCormack, S., 'Uncovering Childhoods: Accessing archival material for projects focused on twentieth century British History', Faculty of History, University of Oxford website (16 November 2022).

⁶⁶ *Gloucester Journal*, 31 May 1924, p.20. The examiners reported that although there had been a very good response to the competition, generally there was a lack of originality, and the authors followed too much on the lines of the teaching they received.

The 14-year-old Mary Wilcox from Cheltenham Central School and winner of the girls' class B section wrote,

Nations are, in many ways, like a set of children. If, among a class of children, one of them does some small thing that all the others dislike, then that same child will not say any more about it if he or she knows that public opinion is against him or her.⁶⁷

13-year-old Kathleen Cheesmer from Christ Church Girls' School summed her thoughts up with these words,

We, as world citizens, should not leave the world's affairs to experts or politicians. If we decide wrongly and foolishly, our civilization may come to an end, but if we decide rightly, a new world is at our doors, a world of peace and sincerity, and dark ignorance will be replaced by clear thinking. That will not come about unless people think this earth too beautiful a place to be turned into a jungle.⁶⁸

In his description of modern war, the 14-year-old Jack Paish from Naunton Park Boys' School draws on images in popular science fiction, films and comics,⁶⁹

War does no good to anyone and a lot of harm to some. Now in these days it is made even more terrible by the hundred and one scientific things which have been invented for use in war, such as gas poison, death rays etc.⁷⁰

It would be very easy to dismiss these examples of pupil writing as merely the results of what their teachers wished them to write, for the kudos of winning a competition. However, the fact that several schools were able to submit pupil work provides evidence that the CLNU material was having some

⁶⁷ Gloucestershire Archives: P6.63GS.

⁶⁸ Gloucestershire Archives: P6.63GS.

⁶⁹ See for example, Fanning, W.J. Jr., *Death Rays and the Popular Media, 1876-1939: A Study of Directed Energy Weapons in Fact, Fiction and Film* (USA, McFarland & Co, 2015).

⁷⁰ Gloucestershire Archives: P6.63GS.

impact on the school curriculum. Furthermore, attempts shown in some of these essays by the pupils to take ownership of ideas surrounding the LNU and to reframe them within their own sphere of understanding, suggests that the teaching was turning into active learning and was entering into the emotional world of some youngsters.

Methods outside the Classroom: Education or Propaganda?

The interwar years saw a rapid growth in films and cinema audiences with a weekly attendance of eighteen to nineteen million by the 1930s.⁷¹ Not only was it popular with adults but amongst this audience were large numbers of children. Recent studies of evidence from the Mass Observation archive also show that many youngsters regularly visited the cinema more than once a week and were prepared to spend a significant amount of their pocket money on tickets.⁷² Films were more than entertainment though. Since the end of the First World War, the political parties, particularly the Conservatives under the steerage of Sir Joseph Ball, but then belatedly Labour, were increasingly aware that this new form of mass communication had a potential to be an effective way of spreading their propaganda and political message to a broader audience.⁷³

This potential was also exploited by several NGOs who saw it as a means of promoting their work to a wider audience. One early exponent of this was Eglantyne Jebb who sent press photographers to film the post-war famine in Russia for the Save The Children Fund. Their films, shown up and down the nation, were unlike anything seen before – images of starving and dead children and burning bodies – and they had the effect of shocking the public into an immediate response.⁷⁴ Consequently the use of the documentary film became an increasingly popular feature of NGOs' campaigning. In one such example, Michelle Tusan has demonstrated that it was used to great effect to raise

⁷¹ Gardiner, J., *The Thirties, an Intimate History* (St Ives, 2010), pp.3-4, 640-4, 659-66 and 670-3.

⁷² Barron, H. and Langhammer, C., (2021), pp.21-34. Also, the LNU's *Headway* vol. XIV no.4 (April 1932) quoted a survey carried out by the LCC's Chief Inspector of Schools, who, on the basis of figures from 29 London schools, reported that as many as 30 per cent of the children in London elementary schools went to the cinema once a week.

⁷³ Cockett, R., 'The Party, Publicity and the Media' in Seldon, A. and Ball, S. (ed.) *The Conservative Century* (New York, 1994), pp. 557-564. Also, Beers, L., *Your Britain: Media and the Making of the Labour Party* (HUP, 2010).

⁷⁴ Mulley, C., *The Woman who Saved Children. A Biography of Eglantyne Jebb* (London, 2009), p.292.

awareness and promote the need for humanitarian work in the Near East after the war.⁷⁵ Not only did film emerge as a ‘new theatre’ with moving images having an immediate and transformative effect on its potentially large audience, but film was also a portable medium with screenings taking place in cinemas, churches, village halls, schools or even travelling vans. James Mansell makes the bold claim that this period of the documentary film was not only a seminal moment in film-making but in modern British history – particularly in a new conceptualization of citizenship and the creation of national identity.⁷⁶

The LNU’s first attempt to produce a documentary turned out to be a controversial affair. *The Auction of the Souls* (released in 1919) aimed to bring attention to the genocide taking place in the aftermath of the war in Armenia. The film used graphic scenes of torture, rape, and crucifixion in the hope it would make audiences aware of the plight of racial minorities in Turkey. However, the film was faced with obscenity charges and could only be released in a censored version. It screened in Cheltenham in April 1920 where it ran for three days in the Winter Gardens but played to an adult-only audience.⁷⁷ Not only was its content thought to be far too graphic for younger viewers but there were fears that it might also incite racial hatred and stoke an anti-British sentiment among Muslims in India in the wake of the Amritsar massacre of 1919. Clearly such a documentary could play little part in the LNU’s educational material aimed at schools.

Aware of the need to find ways of engaging a younger audience, the LNU set about experimenting with different methods of presenting the aims and work of the League, and its new film, *The World War and After* (1927) was the result. The documentary film was considered as the most effective way of giving the work of the League of Nations a reality in the minds of millions of adults and children. With a younger audience in mind, and unlike the earlier attempt, this film shunned the

⁷⁵ Tusan, M., ‘Genocide, Famine and Refugees on Film; Humanitarianism and the First World War’, *Past and Present* no. 237 (2017).

⁷⁶ Anthony, S. and Mansell, J. G., ‘Introduction: The Documentary Film Movement and the Spaces of British Identity,’ *Twentieth Century British History*, 23(1) (2012), pp.1-11.

⁷⁷ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 17 April 1920, p.20.

deployment of terrifying or gruesome pictures. It also avoided the overuse of lengthy sub-titles to convey information. Contemporary reviews suggest that this was successfully achieved,

Particularly vivid is the cartoon showing the gradual spread of war over a map of the world, and there are many clever effects which ought to appeal to children. It is for schools that the film is chiefly intended, and the LNU has prepared suggestions for teachers to use in drawing up an accompanying lesson... It should prove, I think, in the hands of a capable teacher, both popular and instructive in almost any not too sophisticated classroom.⁷⁸

Films had been an occasional feature of the adult branch meetings in the county. In 1927 at a meeting of the Gloucester District Branch, Mr. Macaulay (Painswick) and Mr. Clissold (Nailsworth) spoke in praise of the educational value of the League of Nation's film, which had been shown at their respective branches. They fully supported the view that it 'emphasised the need for helping people to visualise the many-sided activities of the League in different parts of the world.'⁷⁹

The film received its first public showing in Cheltenham (a little belatedly) in 1929 when the CLNU held an event at the Coliseum on November 11th, 12th and 13th which included a screening aimed specifically at senior pupils. The branch first had to seek permission from the Education Committee and in doing so they also put in a request for a grant for £5 towards the costs of showing it. Although the Education Committee looked generally sympathetically on both requests, there was once again a degree of opposition. In the first instance Alderman Moore proposed an amendment that the grant of £5 be deleted on the grounds that 'the League of Nations Union was financed by private subscription, and it was perfectly at liberty to promote its cause and principles at its own expense'.⁸⁰

The film was expected to make money over the three days, and he felt there should be no claim on the public purse, particularly as the film was 'in the nature of propaganda' and that there were those

⁷⁸ *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 12 January 1927, p.8.

⁷⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 7 February 1927, p.1.

⁸⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 1 October 1929, p.3.

who felt that the operations of the League of Nations imperilled rather than strengthened the interests of peace.

The amendment was seconded by Mr A. Miles and General Thomas who doubted,

the good effect of drilling pacifism into the rising generation as though war were always and under every circumstance wrong. By and by, under the influence of such teaching, we should become a nation 'too proud to fight'.⁸¹

Fortunately for the League it had enough supporters on the local Education Committee who argued that teaching and working for peace was not propaganda. A last attempt, this time by Captain Trye, to halt the grant until the Committee had themselves seen the film, was rebutted by Mr Lipson, Clara Winterbotham, and Dr Pruen (all members of the CLNU) on the grounds that 'the objects of the League of Nations were too well known and the honour of the LNU too secure to justify any such stipulation'. The committee then voted 12 to 5 against the amendment and the film and grant were both approved.⁸²

The *Gloucestershire Echo* reported enthusiastically that the film was,

a very skilful piece of League of Nations' propaganda. Its illustrations of points like the making of quarrels have pretty humour; its manner conveying an impression of the way the League works is graphic and striking; and references to various countries are illustrated with beautiful views. The origin and fearful cost of the war in life and money, the resultant desolation, the burden of the cost of armaments, and a host of other points are all made pictorially in a way that few who see the film are likely forget.⁸³

⁸¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 1 October 1929, p.3.

⁸² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 1 October 1929, p.3.

⁸³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 November 1929, p.3.

Over the Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons some 1,500 to 1,600 senior scholars from the town's elementary schools attended a screening of the film along with a range of Armistice Day celebrations.

It is difficult to assess exactly what impact the film made on the younger members of its audience but one telling letter entitled 'A Girl's Thanks' and addressed to the local honorary secretary of the League of Nations Union appeared in the *Gloucestershire Echo* a few days afterwards. The letter was from Irene O'Brien, an eleven-year-old girl who was a pupil at the Parish Church School,

Our girls thank all the members of the League of Nations Union for giving us the opportunity of seeing the interesting educational film 'The World War and After.' It showed and helped us remember the anxiety and pain some of our men bore, so that we might have a better life than theirs. We thoroughly enjoyed it, but it was very sad that English soldiers were blinded by poisonous gas. We all hope the League of Nations will be able to blot out war and make all the different countries friendly with each other. It must have been terrible for the poor little children who were homeless in the war areas.⁸⁴

Although such a response could have been the result of coaching or even dictation, it is interesting to note that in this case there were no obvious connections between the school's staff and the CLNU and it is reasonable to view it as a genuine response from the pupil body.

Pageants: Fancy Dress Internationalism?

Amongst the LNU's propaganda efforts to engage with the young were its pageants. McCarthy suggests that pageantry was immensely popular amongst the local branches for 'delivering the escapist pleasures of theatrical role-play and opportunities for the more creatively inclined to demonstrate their artistic flair.' Previously a somewhat neglected area, they are now regarded as

⁸⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 November 1929, p.3.

evidence of the creation of a new field of symbolic display which ‘both reflected and reinforced a wider shift in public understandings of nationhood in the post-war world.’⁸⁵

The CLNU’s main wave of pageants came in the years 1925-1927. They were presented as ‘Pageants of Peace’, forming part of the town’s wider Armistice Day celebrations. The intention was to involve as many children as possible, either as participants or spectators, not only as entertainment but as a means of bringing about a new ‘enlightened patriotism’ in the next generation of voters and citizens.

An advert for the 1925 pageant was published in the local press announcing that it would take place on November 11 in the Town Hall with over two hundred performers representing the League of Nations in national costume.⁸⁶ It appears to have been well-received and over the next few days several descriptions of the event appeared in the press, including photographs in the weekly supplement of the *Chronicle and Graphic*.⁸⁷

The main item was a *tableau vivant* in which fifty-two girls in white national scarves and bearing aloft national flags marched up to a ‘queen seated on a throne,’ at which point the audience burst into a spontaneous round of applause. The queen then proclaimed the lines,

to all the nations I send my gifts of peace. Let tyrants beware and the doers of evil. They shall
no more bring strife among the nations. Who breaks my reign is a traitor to earth and heaven,
there shall be no place for him in any man’s mercy.

This, together with verses from Wordsworth and appropriate hymns was used to reinforce to its young audience the importance of Britain’s role within the League. The pageant was followed by

⁸⁵ McCarthy, H., ‘The League of Nations, Public Ritual and National Identity in Britain, c.1919–56’, *History Workshop Journal* 70 (2010), pp.108-132.

⁸⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 9 November 1925, p.5.

⁸⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 November 1925, p.3.

addresses from both the Rector (Canon Wilson) and the Mayor (Councillor Dicks) in which they asked all those present, reported at about a thousand, to give their full support to the LNU.⁸⁸

Despite the novelty of a 'Pageant for Peace', the presence of the town's leading authorities suggests that it had not given offence with a notion that Armistice Day had been hi-jacked. Likewise, the cheering of the audience clearly suggested that they had been entertained and there was no hostile correspondence in the press over the following days. Furthermore, when the CLNU held its annual meeting the following year, its honorary secretary Mr Monro Briggs was able to report that membership had gone up to 1,161 with the addition of seventy-seven new members. Whether this was linked to the pageant is unclear, but the committee saw it as something they wished to congratulate themselves for.⁸⁹

How the pageant impacted on its younger audience is more difficult to discern. Although many of the youngsters involved were from Madame Ethel Irving's Cheltenham Academy of Dramatic Art (famed for its tuition in elocution, dramatic art, fencing, pianoforte, singing, French conversation and psychology rather than notions of international citizenship), the visual impact of the pageant would have left its effect. Moments such as the portrayal of 'America' coming on stage announcing, 'we have seemed to hold aloof from our sisters, but our hearts too yearn for peace' and then laying the *Stars and Stripes* at the foot of the queen, would have presented the youngsters with a readily understandable message.

The CLNU committee considered that their efforts had been worthwhile, and it was decided to hold a Peace Pageant on Armistice Day the following year. A press report of the time delivered a more mixed verdict. It found the spectacle a 'well organized affair' and remarked that the Union's effort to

⁸⁸ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 14 November 1925, p.2.

⁸⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 31 March 1926, p.3.

induce the public to think of the future, as well as remember the past, ‘met with widespread approval.’ However, it also expressed some reservations,

One could not help feeling that if all this was really sincere, if mere dressing up and waving of flags was but secondary reason for their presence, if the passionate appeals made by principal actors had in them anything deeper than elocutionary perfection, if the applause of the audience had reference to approval of the ideals expressed rather than the manner of expression, then there is, indeed, a force abroad which shall soon have swept war into the limbo of things that once were but are now forgotten.⁹⁰

A more positive note was struck in that on this occasion as well as Madame Irving’s stage troupe there were some one hundred and thirty pupils from the town’s All Saints’ and Naunton Park Schools taking part. The inclusion of the latter may have been due to the fact that Arthur Dye became head there in 1922 and was himself a stalwart of the CLNU branch, becoming its honorary secretary in 1933. Likewise, Monro Briggs, who as the honorary secretary at the time did much to organise and bring the pageant about, also served on the Vestry and Parochial Council for All Saints church and had a close connection with its school.

The third in this sequence of peace pageants took place on Armistice Day 1927. Entitled ‘Humanity Delivered’, it promised a cast of over two hundred in national costumes. As in the previous year, Madame Irving was very much in charge of the production, again with pupils from Naunton Park and All Saints Schools providing a supporting cast of pupils. That both these two schools had prize winners in the 1924 CLNU essay competition (‘How the League of Nations can settle disputes among nations without wars’), might suggest that their interest in the pageant was more than simply providing an entertainment.

⁹⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 November 1926, p.4.

The pageant itself had a stronger narrative to it than previous ones, with ‘Humanity’ despairing of the world, first listening to the voice of ‘Fear’ saying, ‘Trust in me; we will make the machinery of war more perfect yet.’ ‘Humanity’ showing resolve, calls to the council a range of characters including a trio of ‘Young Hope, Love and Reason.’ The poets Burns, Shelley, Tennyson and Lowell are called upon for their glorious ideals and William Penn tells how his colony maintained a peace policy with the Indians. Above the whole scene sits the ‘Queen of Peace.’

Despite its simplicity, the press called it both ‘decidedly picturesque in its pageantry’ and ‘striking as a method of peace advocacy’.⁹¹ The Rector, Canon Wilson, reflected in his address that there was no glory in war, and that those who believed in the League of Nations were not pacifists who thought war was not justifiable under any circumstances but whose aim was to remove the causes and conditions that enabled and encouraged war. Despite such endorsement, neither the local press nor the CLNU branch made any further reference to the peace pageants and in 1928 the Armistice Day ceremony resorted to a more ‘sombre act of remembrance’ with groups arrayed around the cenotaph and a more traditional style of concert in the evening.

Instead, by the late 1920s such activities migrated towards school Empire Day celebrations, with a ‘growing trend for schools to recognise Britain’s obligations to the League as part of Empire Day festivities.’ As a result of CLNU activities, branch speakers gave addresses as part of schools’ Empire Day celebrations and organised picturesque Empire pageants.⁹² Sustained lobbying by the LNU also led to many LEAs in England and Wales instructing schools to make the League ‘a regular feature of Empire Day.’⁹³ A press report in 1940 describes how this happened,

In schools all over Cheltenham and the Cotswolds the children once more celebrated Empire Day. War-time was not allowed to cast a gloom on the traditional pageants which are so

⁹¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 November 1927, p.5.

⁹² *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 31 May 1941, p.3.

⁹³ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.118.

colourful a feature of the school programme, but inevitably there was a deeper note, significant even to the younger children. Pageants to which teaching staffs had devoted much time and effort were gay affairs of national costume and song, accompanied by the spectacle of the presiding Britannia and her attendants. Patriotic and national songs were sung with vigour, and the proceedings concluded with the saluting of the flag.⁹⁴

However, once war broke out, although the LNU might wish for peace, it was clear, even to members of the CLNU, that they could no longer be its method of delivery and a new theme entered into the dialogue. In addressing pupils at Whaddon Senior School, Daniel Lipson (CLNU chair) said he wanted them to be able to look forward to the future with hope and confidence and plan with some idea of certainty. Although everything was moving in the right direction, rather than the League, the main force for this would be the British Empire,

The inspiration of the British Empire was freedom, and its aim and object was to secure greater freedom for its people.

A similar theme was taken up in addresses at schools across the region including that at Naunton Park School with the Mayor reminding pupils that,

The Empire had been built up by God-fearing men, and wherever the Union Jack flew good laws and happiness prevailed. Other nations were envious of us, and were trying to wrest our Empire from us, but with God's help we should keep it.⁹⁵

Jim English has argued that Empire Day celebrations became part of the wider political battleground and at times led to protests that divided rather than united local communities.⁹⁶ Despite the rhetoric of Empire, because in many cases it was teachers (supported by the LNU) who devised activities and lessons for their pupils, they were able to find ways that suggested the emphasis was more on ideals

⁹⁴ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 1 June 1940, p.2.

⁹⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 23 May 1941, p.6.

⁹⁶ English, J., 'Empire Day in Britain, 1904-1958', *The Historical Journal*, 49, 1 (CUP, 2006), pp.247-276.

of citizenship and internationalism rather than entertainment and spectacle or preserving memories of past imperial glory.

In Cheltenham, although the notion of the Peace Pageant as a large public spectacle staged at the town hall on Armistice Day may well not have survived, such activities did find their niche in schools' Empire Day celebrations. It is in these smaller scale pageants and performances we can find evidence for supporting a continuance of the LNU's aim of turning Britons into enlightened patriots.⁹⁷ Likewise, the role of individual teachers and headteachers was significant in furthering an understanding of internationalism in the emerging generation of pupils.

Pageants did enjoy a revival in the town at the end of the war with themes around thanksgiving and rejoicing. This new trend was set by the 1944 production of 'Salute the Soldiers'.⁹⁸ They were scripted performances, accompanied by bands or orchestra and often featuring well-known soloists. As popular as these were, they were a long way from the peace pageants put on by the LNU in the interwar years.

Critics of pageants included Alfred Zimmern (organiser of LON summer schools in Geneva) who in 1932 had dismissed them as 'fancy-dress internationalism', which, by relying on simplistic and naïve means, did little to promote the principles of the League.⁹⁹ Despite their limitations and transience, they should not be denied some significance. The task of creating enlightened citizens and new internationalists in the classroom alone would have been a more difficult one. They gave many young people in Cheltenham different opportunities to learn more about the LON and to engage with its aims. It is unclear how the messages of these internationalist rituals were internalized by participants or onlookers but as McCarthy has suggested, Britain's membership of, and obligations

⁹⁷ McCarthy, H., 'The League of Nations, Public Ritual and National Identity in Britain, c.1919–56', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 70 (2010), pp.108-132.

⁹⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 May 1944, p.3.

⁹⁹ Zimmern, A.E., 'Education in International Relations: A Critical Survey,' *League of Nations Educational Survey*, 3 (March 1932), p.17.

towards, an imagined international community became more central to understandings of national identity than at any time previously.¹⁰⁰

Beyond the School Gates

The local education committee was one of a number of town groups that proved to be a useful ally in promoting the LNU's educational aims. There was significant cross-over between its membership and that of the CLNU, the most influential of whom was Clara Winterbotham. A press report of 1944 spoke fulsomely of the service she had given in this respect,

It is in education, however, that Ald. Winterbotham has evinced the greatest interest and to which she has devoted a large part of her energies. For many years a member of the Cheltenham Education Committee, she served from 1940 to 1941 as its vice-chairman and in December 1941, she was elected to the chairmanship in place of the late Alderman C. H. Margrett. Under her wise leadership, education in Cheltenham has maintained the high standard for which it has an enviable reputation.¹⁰¹

The Education Committee gave its support to the work of the CLNU: the schools' essay competition in 1924; a joint meeting convened by the CLNU and the Cheltenham Education Committee; the showing of the League of Nations film in 1929; support for paying teachers' expenses incurred attending LON conferences – and there were others. In 1927 the Education Committee bought 24 copies of *What the League of Nations Is* for reading in schools and at the Public Library they had obtained a League of Nations shelf where there was a list of the books available.¹⁰²

Other town bodies also demonstrated a degree of support for the work of the CLNU. In 1920 the town's Public Library Committee agreed to purchase *The Covenant* (the League of Nations'

¹⁰⁰ McCarthy, H., (2010), p.119.

¹⁰¹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 15 April 1944, p.2.

¹⁰² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 30 March 1927, p.5.

quarterly review) at a cost of 14s per annum for the Library shelves.¹⁰³ In 1926 the same committee agreed to purchase some twenty six volumes that had been recommended by the League of Nations Union, at a cost of £7 10s and with £5 donated by the CLNU.¹⁰⁴ In its annual report for 1939 the Cheltenham Public Library, Art Gallery and Museum stated that it had had 33,050 visitors the previous year and that 379,633 volumes had been issued to library readers. Amongst its newly acquired volumes, ‘as in previous years a loan collection of 30 volumes have been received quarterly from the League of Nations Union library, and 182 readers have borrowed these books.’¹⁰⁵ In addition, the LNU also had its own lending library – The Union Lending Library – which offered individuals or branches boxes of books which they could keep for up to three months at no cost other than the postage. Interestingly, Cheltenham Public Library was singled out for comment in *Headway* (1941) for having a regular consignment of thirty books on loan.¹⁰⁶

In 1921 at a meeting of the Town Improvement and Spa Committee it was agreed that the CLNU could use either Montpellier Gardens, or if wet, the Town Hall, free of charge for the reception of the League’s Pilgrimage that year. The following year it was also agreed that the Union could use the Town Hall for a fee reduced from £10 to £5. In 1932, as a special request from Monro Briggs (CLNU honorary secretary) the Union was allowed to use the Town Hall for free for its annual conference lasting from 28 June to 2 July.¹⁰⁷

Although support for the CLNU was not unanimous, with some Councillors arguing that the LNU was a political organisation and should not be supported by the public purse, the majority were supportive of the Union’s aims and saw the efficacy of its propaganda in schools. The local press

¹⁰³ Gloucestershire Archives: CBR/C2/1/2. Cheltenham Borough Council Public Library Committee minutes, 1920.

¹⁰⁴ Gloucestershire Archives: CBR/C2/1/2. Cheltenham Borough Council Public Library Committee minutes, 1926.

¹⁰⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 23 June 1939, p.3.

¹⁰⁶ *Headway in Wartime*, December 1941 no.27.

¹⁰⁷ Gloucestershire Archives: CBR/C2/1/2. Cheltenham Borough Council Town Improvement and Spa Committee minutes, 1932.

adopted a mocking tone towards those who had opposed the grant of £5 towards the showing of the 1929 film, with the headline,

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS IN PERIL! Whether there were any earth tremors at Geneva on Monday afternoon deponent sayeth not: there has been no record of such happenings in the papers. But the League has undergone a terrible experience. It has been the subject of criticism implied if not directly stated in the Cheltenham Education Committee. Certain members of that body, meeting on the day named, opposed the making of a grant of £5 towards the expense of a film, which is to be shown to local school children.

Having drawn its readers in, the editorial made it apparent that any notion that the film was propaganda was inappropriate when the cause was ‘the greatest of all national, international and humanitarian causes – a cause entirely removed from party politics or anything that can be called sectional’. It concluded by reporting that ‘a handsome majority’ of the Committee defeated the attempt to block the grant.¹⁰⁸ The incident provoked little further correspondence and the one letter that did appear, was critical of those who opposed the grant.¹⁰⁹ In general terms the CLNU’s attempts to educate youngsters in foreign affairs met with acceptance, if not a wider support, from the town and its leading bodies.

Young Internationalists in the Making

The CLNU also took steps to promote itself to the town’s youth outside the schools. At a Union meeting in 1934 addressed by Sir Norman Angell, Arthur Dye (CLNU honorary secretary) commenting on the large numbers of young people attending, announced that they would shortly be forming a Youth Group.¹¹⁰ This group (for members between the ages of 16 and 30 years) came into being in May 1934 and its stated aim was to,

¹⁰⁸ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 5 October 1929, .p.3

¹⁰⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 5 October 1929, p.1.

¹¹⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 March 1934, p.4.

study international affairs, and it is hoped in this way to keep in close contact with visitors from other countries who are staying in Cheltenham...A winter programme of debates, lectures and social gatherings is being arranged, and the honorary secretary, Mr. A. M. Smith, the Technical College, Cheltenham, will be glad to afford further information.¹¹¹

Although there are no further references to Mr Smith in the press, both Ernest Ivamy (principal of the Technical College) and Lenzil Staddon (vice-principal) were stalwarts of the CLNU. In June that year at a well-attended meeting, it was announced that the aims of this new youth group were,

the promotion of international peace and cooperation, the cultivation of international friendships and understanding, and increasing the influence of the League of Nations Union by adding to its membership.

Its winter programme opened with a dance and included the formation of a study circle, debates and public meetings.¹¹² Activities also included social ones as was evidenced by a tennis tournament it held that year.¹¹³

The group must have had something of a stuttering start as in October 1938 it had to be reformed. To reinvigorate it, a Mr G.E. Stent of Magdalen College, Oxford, addressed a gathering at the Gloucestershire Dairy café on the history of the League of Nations. He discussed the growth of Fascism in Germany and Italy and maintained that a firm stand was necessary against the further encroachment of Fascist influence. Miss M. Gale of the British Youth Peace Assembly also spoke and gave an inspiring account of the World Youth Congress in America when 54 nations were represented. She reported the activities of the Emergency Youth Peace Campaign culminating in the Youth Rally in London of 12,000 people. At the end of the addresses an interesting discussion followed, and it was decided to develop the work of the League of Nations Union Youth Group in

¹¹¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 29 May 1934, p.3.

¹¹² *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 30 June 1934, p.2.

¹¹³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 17 April 1935, p.8.

Cheltenham.¹¹⁴ How successful this attempt was is not clear, but in the following year it was reported that a contingent of 32 youths from the district (including ten from Cheltenham) travelled by coach to attend a Youth Peace Pilgrimage in London.¹¹⁵

As the *Gloucestershire Echo* gives the names of the ten who travelled together it is possible to gain a little more insight into their views and how these may have developed through contact with the youth group. As well as their coming together through the CLNU youth group, several were keen on drama and were active in the Bayshill Players, which itself was associated with Bayshill Unitarian Church where Barbara Thomas was minister. It could be assumed that they would have been influenced by her whilst at Sunday school in their early days and then later by listening to her sermons on the League. The local organiser of the group was a seventeen-year-old Margaret Hamilton.¹¹⁶ Margaret married another of the group, Laurie Clements, and in the 1940s both were active in the local Labour Party, with Margaret regularly speaking out in the press on issues such as fair local rates, free places at the Grammar School and the nationalisation of the mines.¹¹⁷ Laurie became chairman of the local Labour Party group and Margaret stood as councillor for the St Mark's area of the town.

Other members of the group also appear in the letters pages of the press giving their opinions on various subjects. Not long after the Peace Pilgrimage, Jean Protherough (also a member of the Bayshill Junior Club) wrote to the press stating that,

Cheltenham is to be congratulated on the remarkably high percentage of conscientious objectors. They have at any rate given thought to their personal responsibility and come to a conclusion in accordance with their Christian up-bringing.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 October 1938, p.6.

¹¹⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 20 February 1939, p.1.

¹¹⁶ ancestry.co.uk. 1939 Register. Margaret is recorded as a short-hand typist and clerk. Laurie is a skilled workman in the GPO Engineering Department, Telecommunications Installation. They married at Bayshill Church in October 1940.

¹¹⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 July 1945, p.4. Letter about the local Grammar school charging fees for places.

Gloucestershire Echo, 5 February 1946, p.4. Letter about Lipson's lack of support for nationalization of mines.

Gloucestershire Echo, 2 August 1947, p.3. Letter about local rates.

¹¹⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 7 June 1939, p.4.

This could suggest that it was not just Jean's convictions that had in part been shaped by the CLNU, but that they had had some wider effect in the town. However, Jean's letter did not go unanswered and it provoked a certain amount of criticism from those who felt their duty was to fight.

Reg Seabright was a bright student at school. His foray into the letter pages of the press came after the war when he spoke out for friendship with Russia and the need to trade with her. In particular, he was critical of events in Hungary and warned,

I repeat that Hitler and Mussolini paid the price of anti-Communism. Let their new imitators beware lest the same fate befalls them.¹¹⁹

However this earned him a barrage of criticism, not least from a Mr Cousens, (press officer of the North Glos. branch of the Commonwealth Party) who accused him of being a communist.¹²⁰

These cases show that the group produced young citizens who were prepared to speak out on matters of foreign policy and articulate a line of argument of their own even against opposition. Through its efforts in schools and education more broadly and alongside a range of factors, including Church, Chapel and parents, the CLNU helped produce a generation of McCarthy's 'enlightened patriots' who saw themselves as part of a broader, international framework.¹²¹

No further reports of the group's activities appear in the press – understandably during the war other preoccupations came to the fore and the League's work moved into the background. It was not until 1946 that interest in internationalism reappeared in the town and with a strong sense of déjà vu, in an attempt to encourage the youth of Cheltenham to become conversant with the United Nations Charter, the local Rotary Club offered three prizes for the best essays from those between 16 and 19 years of age.¹²²

¹¹⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 June 1947, p.4.

¹²⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 1 July 1947, p.4.

¹²¹ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.124.

¹²² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 18 December 1946, p.4.

A final example of the CLNU engaging with the town's youth was the forming of a branch at St Paul's Teacher Training College of the British Universities' League of Nations Society. Strictly speaking the branch was not one directly related to the CLNU, and it had its basis from wider afield. It was part of a registered circle for discussing international relations in connection with the will of the late Andrew Carnegie; however, it did maintain friendly relations with the CLNU.¹²³ In 1936, calling itself The Carnegie International Relations Club at St. Paul's Training College (affiliated to the League of Nations Union), it opened its ninth session with a talk and discussion entitled 'Spain'. The lecture was attended by over a hundred students and lecturers and on this occasion the visiting speaker was a Mr Edward Goodman. He spoke of his recent visit to Spain and how the Republican Government was making progress. He also pointed out how English people had been told of 'Red excesses' but that little that had been published of the dreadful outrages committed by the rebels.¹²⁴ As part of its 1937 winter series of talks, Major Neil Hunter, formerly Political Officer for the British Government in the Sudan, gave the students his eyewitness accounts of Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia and stating that 'under Italian rule the country was rapidly degenerating'.¹²⁵ As brief references as these are, both testify that a generation of pupils had emerged from schools with an interest in foreign affairs which they were taking forward into their adult lives.

Summary

The effort made by the LNU to win the hearts and minds of the next generation after the 1914 war was a considerable one. It had set up its Educational Advisory Committee in 1919 with the aim of working closely with teachers, the teaching Unions and Local Education Authorities to promote an awareness of the League's aims among the nation's schoolchildren. Again, ten years later in its annual report for 1929, the LNU expressed the wish that all children and young people should,

¹²³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 11 May 1932, p.1.

¹²⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 17 October 1936, p.4.

¹²⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 February 1937, p.3.

before completing their formal education, learn something of the aims and work of the League of Nations, the terms of its Covenant and the recent growth in international co-operation. To support this aim the LNU provided teachers with a number of resources including 30,000 copies of a new and enlarged handbook, wall maps, 45,000 leaflets distributed on Empire Day and various booklists.

The Union was also keen to promote an interest and awareness of the work of the LON outside of the classroom that would create a sense of world citizenship amongst the younger generation. By the end of 1929 there were 773 junior and school branches and a termly distribution of 35,000 copies of *The League News*, a paper specifically aimed at the young. Not only had pupils' work been exhibited at Geneva but that year over 100 boys and girls from the upper forms of public and secondary schools attended a very successful holiday lecture course. Also, by 1929 a revised version of the LON film *The World War and After* had been shown to thousands of children across Britain and was now reaching an international audience.¹²⁶

The success of the LNU's task was commented on in general terms in an editorial in the *Gloucestershire Echo* in 1930,

It cannot be denied that the Union, by its powerful propaganda and preparatory education of public opinion, has cleared the way for the Governments of the day to make steady advance towards international peace and security. Following the British initiative and example, similar societies are now at work in 39 other countries, each striving with might and main to educate its democracy to the ideal of maintaining order and finally liberating mankind from war and its dire effects.¹²⁷

The case studies here demonstrate that the ideas of the League were being promoted at a grassroots level in a range of ways throughout the town's educational institutions. In some instances, it was

¹²⁶ LSE: LNU/7/7. Annual report, 1929.

¹²⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 June 1932, p.4.

through the direct use of LON materials such as films, essay competitions and lectures; in others it was provided by teachers adapting and producing their own materials, often acting as vehicle for other curriculum areas such as history or language.

However, LON material was more than just a teaching aid and was also deployed to encourage a more active and participatory citizenship amongst young people – not least on foreign policy.

Through these activities many of the town's young people in the interwar years had opportunities to discuss and debate issues of internationalism – with a lucky few experiencing it first-hand. These experiences happened across a wide age range of pupils and students and across the institutional state/private education divide. The work was carried forward by individuals, many of whom were members of the town's LNU branch.

However, schools had to be careful to tread a balanced path and were often mindful of the charge levelled by opponents of the LON, that education could easily slip into political propaganda. In a series of prolonged attacks, as early as 1922 Captain Trye, when it was mooted that LNU speakers should be allowed to visit the town's schools, expressed the hope that the Education Committee were 'not going to start introducing politics into the schools or permit the publications of any political body of any complexion whatever to be used'.¹²⁸ Occasionally such attacks, although rare, became more hostile and schools could find themselves subject to charges of bias. One such was a letter from the 'Patriot' published in the *Gloucestershire Echo* in 1927 entitled 'Pernicious Teaching in Schools', claiming that,

the Teachers' Labour League is a Communist organisation affiliated to the International Teachers' Union and drawing its inspiration from Bolshevist Russia...Its policy and that of

¹²⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 June 1922, p.1. Cheltenham Education Committee.

the Communists is to spread pernicious teaching in schools. To that all decent English men and women object.’¹²⁹

Such opposition to the use of LNU material in schools was generally overruled by more moderate members of the Committee. However, it could cause some effect within schools themselves. LNU offers to provide speakers were declined at times, with a polite but firm refusal on the grounds that they had staff of their own to deliver such talks.¹³⁰ However, schools could present education about the LON as pupil-led and voluntary which in turn gave a unique voice to their views on issues of internationalism. Despite the opposition it met in some quarters, evidence here supports the observation that,

a large proportion of British school children received basic instruction on the aims and activities of the LON, whilst some, evidently, received very much more.¹³¹

When it comes to evaluating the reception and influence of LNU materials and teaching on the town’s youth it is more difficult to reach a judgement. Undoubtedly it seems to have captured their interest and engagement: they wrote essays, they acted in pageants, they listened to speakers, they watched films, and they discussed and debated the LON. Some, mainly older pupils took to the pages of the press to express their views.

It could be argued that exposure to LNU material in schools helped produce citizens prepared to give a lifelong commitment to the ideals of the League. One of the best examples of this was that of Ladies College pupil Fenella Crombie (later Mrs Paton). On leaving school she served in the LON secretariat. On returning to her hometown of Aberdeen and marrying in 1923, she played a prominent role in her local LNU branch. As its honorary secretary, she gave frequent Empire Day talks on the LON at her local school, hosted LNU events and meetings at her house (Balgownie

¹²⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 23 March 1927, p.4.

¹³⁰ LSE: LNU 5/23. LNU Education Committee 29 January 1926.

¹³¹ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.123.

Lodge), and in 1935 visited the LON headquarters in Geneva. She gave a lifelong commitment to social work in Aberdeen, setting up the St Katherine's community centre. As part of her work with the Board of Aberdeen Hospital she established the first family planning clinic in the city.¹³² As a founder governor of Gordonstoun School, she is credited as having arranged for lessons in modern Greek to be given to the then Duke of Edinburgh. Given her social status and political connections, one wonders to what extent Fenella was 'made' an international citizen by the LNU or whether she was a remarkable individual who would have found her own way there by various means anyway.

The permanence of LNU's teaching and methods can also be questioned if we return once more to Jack Paish, our 1923 essay prize winner. In an interview with his daughter, she remembers him as a mild and gentle man who never lost his temper, but also a man whose views in adulthood were shaped by his wartime experience of being held prisoner of war by the Japanese.¹³³ Although he said little about the war to his family, he firmly believed that the dropping of the atom bomb was a necessity if the war was to end, and even many years later, he would not consider buying a Japanese car. This testimony is a timely reminder that an individual's support for the LON could be mutable and was as much governed by contemporary circumstances and life experience as by any sense of ideal or principle.

¹³² *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 22 October 1949, p.6.

¹³³ Email correspondence with Bridget Paish (daughter), October 2021

Chapter 6. The CLNU and Women

This chapter examines the various roles women played within the local branch of the LNU and considers the ways in which they developed an increasing engagement with internationalist foreign policy and pacifism.

A conventional narrative that the women's movement splintered and became less effective after 1918 and the partial winning of the franchise has been increasingly challenged. Although women's participation in the politics of Westminster remained held back by a lack of opportunity other avenues were opening for them.¹ Women activists could be found in all three of the main parties, but it was in non-party, voluntary organisations, such as the LNU, that women demonstrated the greatest amounts of political engagement. Through them they became trained in the procedures of campaigning, public speaking, and committee work, which in turn enabled them to develop a sense of legitimacy and a confidence to exert a greater influence on parliament.

The notion that women were led into such activism by a sense of gendered interests has also been challenged of late and it is argued that maternalism was replaced by new ideas of citizenship – both national and international. In a re-examination of female philanthropy in the interwar years, Eve Colpus demonstrates that those traditional motors that had brought women into charity work – namely duty, maternalism and, in some cases, a sense of 'Lady Bountiful' patronization of those in need – were increasingly abandoned.² Instead, women philanthropists at home and abroad approached their work with a new sense of professionalism, knowledge, and a desire to reshape and modernise society.

¹ Thane R.P.P., *Women and Political Participation in England and Ireland: What difference did the vote make?* ed. by Thane, R.P.P. and Breitenbach, P.E. (London, 2020), pp.12-23.

² Colpus, E., *Female Philanthropy in the Interwar World: Between Self and Other* (London, 2020).

There were, however, ways in which membership of the LNU pointed towards a ‘feminised grassroots movement’.³ Indeed, at the end of the war Viscount Cecil (president of the LNU from 1923 to 1945) had claimed that in terms of carrying the nation forward, ‘women are specially equipped for service in a task that must be performed in the near future’.⁴ It was assumed that their social maternalism, at times disparagingly referred to as ‘mothering of the world’, would best suit them to the task of championing the cause of peace.⁵ Indeed, in 1919 through the Women’s International League many had demonstrated this by responding to an appeal for one million India-rubber teats for feeding bottles for German babies.⁶ It was also the case that the League’s international agenda regarding women’s rights (suffrage, eligibility for all state appointments, equal guardianship of children, divorce, domestic status, rights of inheritance, protective labour legislation, and enforcement of the anti-White Slave traffic laws) was virtually the same as the programme of British feminists.⁷

The balance of the argument is a fine one though. On one hand the LNU, despite the existence of tokenism, provided women with many new opportunities and allowed them to ‘develop a voice’ in the traditionally male-dominated area of foreign affairs.⁸ By involving women from the outset, particularly in its committee structures, the League provided many women with the chance to work as ‘non-state actors’ in a transnational campaigning organisation,

How wonderful it seems, on the very threshold of their wider life as citizens, women find this great work for peace awaiting them! To take a share in hastening the advent of a lasting peace for the whole world is a great privilege and a great responsibility.⁹

³ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.187.

⁴ McCarthy, *The British People*, cited p.184.

⁵ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.182.

⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 January 1919, p.3.

⁷ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 13 March 1920, p.5.

⁸ McCarthy, H., (2012), p.192.

⁹ LNU Pamphlet, *A Woman's Role in the League of Nations* (1919).

On the other hand, a patronisingly feminised notion of women as the guardians of peace persisted through the interwar years and can readily be found in aspects of the League's work in girls' schools and in their popular pageants.

Exactly how much of a share women were permitted to take in leading and shaping the direction of the work of the League is debatable.¹⁰ Whereas research has begun to look more closely at the role of women in the leadership and headquarters of the LON and LNU, relatively less has been done in the *terra incognita* of the local branches.¹¹ It is necessary to drill down into the work of these branches to arrive at a clearer understanding of the experiences of women at grassroots level. Karen Hunt and June Hamman argue in their call for an 'Archaeology' of interwar women's politics that it is only by 'reconfiguring the national story on the local' that we will gain a fuller and more nuanced understanding of the nature of women's networks and their involvement in political issues more generally.¹² Taking this as its cue, this chapter offers a look at the dynamic between tradition and modernity for women (collectively and individually) that existed within the CLNU.

Case Studies

This chapter presents three case studies of women who were prominent within the CLNU. It considers their formal and institutionalised roles and reflects on the nature and extent of any influence they were able to exert over the direction of the local branch. The case studies are Edith Geddes, Dorothea Jordan, and Barbara Thomas. All three spoke at meetings and were committee members. Dorothea was the only woman to hold a named post within the branch as 'honorary secretary for the sub-committee for propaganda in the villages.'¹³ Significantly, all held prominent

¹⁰ LNU Pamphlet by D.M. Northcroft, *Women at Work in the League of Nations* (1923). Whilst listing several women working in the Secretariat and the Assembly, admits that as yet, women are not yet represented in the Assembly or the International Court of Justice.

¹¹ Pigue, M., *Gender Distribution in the League of Nations: The Start of a Revolution?* (Aarhus University, 2017).

¹² Hunt, K. and Hannam, J., 'Towards an Archaeology of Interwar Women's Politics: the Local and the Everyday' in *The Aftermath of Suffrage* ed. by Gottlieb, J. and Toye, R., (Basingstoke, 2013) pp.124-141. Provides a study of post-suffrage activity in Bristol and Manchester.

¹³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 11 June 1921, p.3.

positions outside of the Union, either in local government, political parties, local organisations or in Barbara Thomas's case, as a church minister. All had prominent familial connections and status within the town, suggesting perhaps, that it was only women of a certain social standing that figured within the leadership of the CLNU.

a. Edith Geddes 1870-1948

Whilst admitting that more research needs to be done at grassroots level, in a study based on a sample of 111 former members of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League, Philippe Vervaecke states that after 1918,

Former Antis remained aloof from many organisations which appeared after the war. The League of Nations was noticeably absent from the bodies they joined, which is foreseeable considering the appeal of imperial patriotism amongst anti-suffragists.¹⁴

As an anti-suffragist, Edith Geddes' career would seem to belie this trend.¹⁵ Not only was Edith an active member of her local LNU branch but rather than retreating from 'gendered public activities' she played a very public role in the political life of the town for a number of years in the 1920s.

Before examining her role within the CLNU it is well worth considering her career more broadly. Edith was born in 1870 into a military family. Her father, Colonel John Geddes, after retiring from a distinguished military career was by 1881 living with his family in Cheltenham. The 1881 census records that Edith was living in Suffolk Square (a fashionable part of the town) with her parents, two brothers, a sister and six servants.¹⁶ Edith's brothers attended Cheltenham College and her sister attended Cheltenham Ladies College. Edith most likely received her education from a governess, and it always rankled with her that she never had the opportunity to attend school. However, Edith was

¹⁴ Vervaecke, P., 'Doing Great Public Work' in *The Aftermath of Suffrage* ed. by Gottlieb, J. and Toye, R. (Basingstoke, 2013), p.116.

¹⁵ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 4 March 1911, p.14. Records Geddes as the honorary secretary of the Cheltenham branch of the Women's Anti-Suffrage League.

¹⁶ ancestry.co.uk. 1881 Census.

not lacking at all in education and in later life frequently took lecture courses run by the Oxford University Extension College to which she submitted prize-winning essays. She was a fluent speaker of German, an accomplished pianist and fine art painter.

Edith's life before 1918 bore many of the hallmarks of that 'set of public-spirited ladies whose patriotism was spurred by the outbreak of war'.¹⁷ The family moved in fashionable circles, regularly attending several of the town's balls and dances. Both the Primrose League and Victoria League figured prominently with the family. Similarly, Edith's leanings towards the Empire were shown by her presence at Women's Unionist and Tariff Reform meetings. Her first contact with the local branch of the Anti-Suffrage League came in 1908 when she attended a 'No Votes for Women' meeting. Within a year she had taken on the role of honorary secretary and was busy fundraising for the cause. Alongside these duties she first served on the management committee of Naunton Park School and was then elected to the town's Education Committee in 1912. Her work with the Education Committee was put on hold in 1913 when she responded to the more pressing need of service with Naunton Park VAD hospital for the duration of the war.

After 1918 Edith took a different direction to many Anti-suffragists. Rather than stepping back from prominence in public life, her career moved decidedly forwards. Two events linked to the war may have been party to this shift of direction. One was the death of her two brothers – Augustus killed at Ypres in 1915 and George who died of a cerebral haemorrhage in 1919. Like so many other families who experienced the loss of loved ones, she supported calls for a memorial. In 1921 she contributed two guineas to the Cheltenham War Memorial Fund 'in proud memory of her two splendid brothers' and later attended its unveiling.¹⁸

In 1920, Edith's father, John died. Colonel Geddes had been a 'great and respected resident of the town' who had 'usefully devoted his leisure after a military career to the administration of parochial

¹⁷ Vervaecke, P., (2013), p.111.

¹⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 26 April 1921, p.4.

affairs and in connection with education.’¹⁹ It is noticeable in press reports how many times the middle-aged spinster, Edith, was accompanied to events, both social and political, by her father. His passing gave her an opportunity to become a more independent (and wealthy) woman capable of following her own path.

Edith’s first step into the local political sphere was her involvement with the town’s branch of the Women’s Local Government Association. She became its treasurer and then in 1918, with the group’s backing, stood and was elected as a Councillor for the town’s North Ward. Two years later Edith stood for the South Ward and again was elected. In both cases she stood successfully against male candidates. Edith served on an impressive range of committees as a councillor, and it was noted in the 1921 Municipal Diary that her total was eight committees when the average was six. Despite some clear conservative leanings, Edith always stood as an independent.

In terms of her work with Cheltenham’s Women Citizens Association, she was keen to see women come forward and stand for municipal office, regardless of their political persuasion,

Let us keep party politics out of things municipal as long as we can... women’s share in local government ought to be non-party and non-political because what we want is the very best women to come forward, irrespective of party.²⁰

An aim of the CWCA was to foster a sense of citizenship in women and encourage them to make full use of their voting power and to secure adequate representation of women in the administration. This was not necessarily restricted to the political parties and was also found in voluntary organisations, [after 1918] larger numbers of women joined non-party political organizations that were dedicated to educating women to use their civil rights and worked for highly political goals.’²¹

¹⁹ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 29 May 1920, p.8.

²⁰ *Cheltenham Examiner*, 20 March 1913, p.3.

²¹ Breitenbach, P. E. and Thane, R. P. P., eds. (2012), p.17.

Edith was still of a mind, however, that women's work within the public domain had a gendered role and clearly felt that men and women worked in separate spheres,

One of the fundamental differences between men and women is that women's minds are constituted to deal mostly with details, while the minds of men take the broader view, and cannot grasp the details so readily. I cannot see that there should be any rivalry between them. Each should strive to be best in their own sphere. Women's sphere is pre-eminently the home and the detailed work that lies with her men, town, or village. No one can deny that the care of the poor, the sick and the children is best left to women, and it is largely the case with the care of the poor, the sick and the children, that Local Government has to deal with it, and therefore we want women to take up this work.²²

These were roles that Edith carried out with vigour both as a town councillor and in her work with voluntary organisations. The list of her activities is an impressive one and included: honorary treasurer of the St Peter's Working Girls Club;²³ honorary secretary of the Oxford Extension College;²⁴ Manager for Naunton Park School;²⁵ Red Cross Commandant for Cheltenham in charge of Naunton Park Hospital during the war;²⁶ treasurer of Cheltenham's Women's Local Government Association;²⁷ president of the Cheltenham Women's Citizens' Association;²⁸ founder of the town's Save the Children Fund branch;²⁹ president of the Cheltenham and District Food Reform and Health Association;³⁰ member of the National Vigilance Committee;³¹ and president of a Homecrofting scheme to build affordable new homes in the town.³² In addition, Edith promoted the causes of

²² *Cheltenham Examiner*, 20 March 1913, p.3.

²³ *Cheltenham Examiner*, 15 June 1904, p.8.

²⁴ *Cheltenham Examiner*, 7 October 1909, p.5.

²⁵ *Cheltenham Examiner*, 12 May 1910, p.11.

²⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 31 May 1915, p.1.

²⁷ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 20 July 1918, p.2.

²⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 17 July 1919, p.5.

²⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 29 June 1920, p.3.

³⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 16 January 1924, p.5.

³¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 February 1924, p.5.

³² *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 23 February 1929, p.12.

vegetarianism and anti-vivisection and frequently spoke in the town for the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection.³³ She also supported a Zenana Bible and medical mission in India.³⁴ Similarly, much of her work as a Councillor dealt with education, housing, maternity, and child raising, welfare, unemployment, and overcrowding - all of which could be considered as traditionally lying within the women's sphere.³⁵

For those women seeking to improve social conditions at home it was not a big leap to see how these could be made more possible if peace and stability could be achieved internationally. However, in Edith's case her participation in the activities of the CLNU appears as a divergence from the path she had trodden in the years before 1920 - not least her connection with the Victoria Association and her support for the Women's Unionist and Tariff Reform Association.³⁶

A likely introduction to the CLNU came through her association with branch members Graham Paterson and Clara Winterbotham, with whom she worked closely within the town in support of the local Save the Children Fund. Her first public appearances with the CLNU were as part of the platform party who attended Lord Cecil's visit in February 1920 and again in September when Maude Royden spoke at the Town Hall. The following year, at the CLNU's first annual meeting, she was mentioned by name as someone who had given much help to the branch.³⁷

Women seldom assumed leadership roles in local LNU branches and despite Edith's social status and her role as a town councillor she never held a named office within the CLNU. However, she did serve as a committee member with the role of speaking in nearby villages and parishes to recruit

³³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 5 April 1922, p.2.

³⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 8 October 1920, p.3. Report of meeting at which Miss Geddes presided, 'and in the course of an earnest appeal on behalf of the mission pleaded for a greater enthusiasm and a broader outlook upon the effort that was being made to raise the standard of the people of the East. She had been trying to stir up this enthusiasm in Cheltenham for many years.'

³⁵ Thane, P., 'The Impact of Mass Democracy on British Political Culture 1918-1939' in *The Aftermath of Suffrage* ed. by Gottlieb, J. and Toye, R., (Basingstoke, 2013), p.63.

³⁶ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 18 March 1911, p.19.

³⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 9 March 1921, p.4.

support for the branch. Typically, her talks reflected a commitment to internationalism but one in which Britain was able to take a strong moral lead,

She then proceeded to give what the Chairman described as a very able and lucid account of the Italo-Greek dispute and of the part played by the League in securing a peaceful settlement...She was then asked to give her opinion as to whether this country ought to set the example of reducing armaments if other countries hesitated to begin. Miss Geddes replied that personally she believed that Britain might safely set such an example, and that the rest of the world would be sure to follow.³⁸

Unsurprisingly, given her work with the SCF, Edith often spoke of the barbarism, cruelty, and expense of war. She encouraged others to join the LNU in order to save the children of the future from the sufferings of conflict and civilisation from being annihilated. Edith also praised the humanitarian work of the League,

through health organisations it saved Europe from a plague of typhus, smallpox, and diphtheria and prevented an epidemic amongst Greek refugees last year; it established legislation for the suppression of the white slave trade; it controlled the sale of opium and noxious drugs.³⁹

Edith's work with the CLNU came to an end in the mid-1920s as she began to suffer increasing ill-health. She resigned from many of the bodies she had led or played a large part in, of which the CLNU was one. In 1928 she left the town with her lifelong friend Agnes Briggs and moved to Hampshire – to live in a cottage aptly called Peace Cottage. Her name does not appear in the list of CLNU subscribers for 1932, nor is she mentioned in any further press reports – and it is reasonable to conclude that her connection with the CLNU ceased when she left the town.⁴⁰

³⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 19 October 1923, p.5.

³⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 30 April 1924, p.4.

⁴⁰ Cheltenham Public Library: CW/63G323.3CHE CLNU membership list for 1932.

A further reason for Edith breaking with the branch may have been the LON's refusal to declare itself fully against animal vivisection where it was deemed necessary for drug and medicinal testing. One of her CWCA colleagues, Theodora Flower Mills – at one time a firm advocate for the League – had already split with it for this reason. Edith called testing on animals 'a sin and one of the greatest blots on the civilization of the present day – just as war was going back to barbaric ages, so vivisection was really throwing back to barbarism'.⁴¹ That she equated the two causes suggests they had equal status in her mind. She felt very compromised, having asked the League its position on vivisection, to receive a reply that it was committed to it. Matters were made worse when the local Anti-Vivisection Union pronounced that,

In our opinion the League of Nations has by this regrettable action, entirely stultified its own position as a centre of moral integrity; for it has become the dupe of a commercial combine and has gone out of its way to patronise cruelty in one form while endeavouring to put a stop to it in another. In proportion as this is realised, the League of Nations is bound to suffer.⁴²

We cannot be sure if Edith formerly ended her support for the LNU, but like many others she found herself having to respond to a set of different circumstances as the 1930s progressed. Although nearly in her seventies when war broke out, a family member recalls that she worked as a translator in the Censor's Office. As with the First World War, Edith's notion of citizenship was one that put service to the nation before any ideological concerns.

Edith's career illustrates that women who were politically active during the campaign for the vote did not cease to be once it had been gained. Because there were relatively few opportunities in national politics many joined NGOs. This was a path open to suffragists, suffragettes and anti-suffragettes alike and the CLNU's non-partisan nature made it possible to work alongside former opponents. The eclectic nature of the LNU's internationalism also meant that supporters of the

⁴¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 30 October 1920, p.4.

⁴² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 5 April 1922, p.2.

empire (such as Edith) could find a space within its ranks, believing that Britain's status meant that it could be a leader and model for other nations to follow.

For many women the LON's work as a humanitarian organisation was all-important. Edith's concerns for the education and welfare of others were writ large in the work of the League. Her membership of the Union was a commitment to 'good citizenship' rather than any ideological stand for pacifism. Her loyalty to the League remained a pragmatic one, vulnerable to changing circumstances and until such time that it was clear the League had failed its purpose.

b. Dorothea Jordan 1881-1952

Dorothea Jordan's connection with the CLNU was a more expected one, in that despite its non-partisan stance many of the town's leading Liberals felt at home in its ranks,

The League represented the practical expression of quintessential liberal principles, the scaling up to international level of the values of law and order, civility and democratic accountability which had enabled Britain to follow a peaceful path into modernity.⁴³

The Jordan family lived in the fashionable suburb of Charlton Kings with two servants and were relatively wealthy. Her grandfather, William, owned a farm of some 296 acres, employing 14 labourers and 4 boys.⁴⁴ Dorothea's father, Henry, was listed as a coal merchant. William was active within town affairs, where he sat on the local Board and promoted the need for better education locally. Henry with his wife, Mary, was also active within the community, helping to raise monies for local and international projects, such as a scheme to help Belgian refugees in 1914.

It is not clear what formal education Dorothea received.⁴⁵ However, the young Dorothea often accompanied her parents to public meetings, through which she was introduced to a notion of active

⁴³ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.63.

⁴⁴ 1881 census. Dorothea is listed as Mary Dorothea.

⁴⁵ The 1891 census listed her as a 'student'.

citizenship.⁴⁶ It was under her mother's guidance that Dorothea was enlisted into the ranks of the local suffragist movement with both women signing a book of thanks to their local MP, Sir James Agg-Gardner, for his support for the Conciliation Bill of 1912.⁴⁷ Although Dorothea justified her support of the Conservative Agg-Gardner on the grounds that the Liberals had failed to support the Conciliation Bill, she still declared herself to be a 'Liberal Suffragist'.⁴⁸ In 1912 Dorothea was part of a group who spoke at the Winchcombe Literary and Debating Society in favour of the Women's Vote.⁴⁹

Her first connections with the CLNU were in 1920 when she wrote a series of articles on the LON, and attended the Town Hall meeting addressed by Maude Royden. Her articles were fully endorsed by the local press as an admirable series which were currently available at the Free Library and that all those who really wished to understand the League would be 'well advised to study.'⁵⁰

Dorothea was also very busy with seemingly tireless efforts to promote the LNU in the town's surrounding villages. In 1921, in addition to her roles as speaker and committee member, somewhat uniquely for a woman, she was given a titled role within the branch as 'Honorary Secretary for Propaganda in the Villages'. This role was far from honorific, and in the space of a few months in 1922 and 1923 Dorothea gave talks to meetings at: Combe Hill, Tredington School, an open meeting at Colesbourne, Churchdown, Shurdington School, Cowley Manor (three occasions), the Andoversford Institute, Staverton School, Swindon School, Elkstone School and Oxenton School.⁵¹ Although on some occasions attendance at these meetings was relatively small, they often ended

⁴⁶ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 4 March 1899, p.4. I.O.G.T Tivolian Excelsior Lodge held in Assembly Rooms. Mr H. Jordan presiding. Miss Jordan read 'Women's Rights'.

⁴⁷ Jones, S., *Votes for Women: Cheltenham and the Cotswolds* (Stroud, 2018), pp.194-6.

⁴⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 September 1911, p.3.

⁴⁹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 14 December 1912, p.7.

⁵⁰ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 13 March 1920, p.5. They appeared in a column entitled 'Women Citizens' Activities'.

⁵¹ For example: *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 April 1922, *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 14 October and 11 November 1922.

with a number of new enrolments for the CLNU. It is not surprising then that at the CLNU's 1923 annual meeting she was thanked for having organised and participated in so many village meetings.⁵²

An interesting episode in Dorothea's activities with the CLNU appeared in a letter she wrote in 1922 to the editor of the *Gloucestershire Echo* that,

Members of the Cheltenham Branch of the League of Nations Union will be interested to learn that I have in my possession a letter from former President Wilson expressing his interest in an account which I sent of the work which we are doing in this town and neighbourhood. The letter will be read at the members' meeting at the Grammar School on Tuesday evening, and anyone who cares to see the autograph signature will have an opportunity of doing so on that occasion.⁵³

There is nothing recorded to indicate that Dorothea was charged to do this by the CLNU and one can only assume that she took it upon herself to contact Wilson. Unfortunately, the letter has long since been lost, but as late as 1943 she was offering to show it to any Americans who would like to see it. If they cared to call at her house, she had two letters, dated December 1921, and November 1922, both from their former president.

Alongside her work with the CLNU, Dorothea took on a prominent role in political and municipal activities. In conjunction with her work with the town's Liberals she became secretary of its Middle Ward and worked hard to secure an increased membership of the party. In 1937 she became vice-chair of the Liberal Association and as late as 1950 was seconding the Liberal candidate for the Tewkesbury and Cirencester division. Often her work with the Liberal Party took her into the sphere of internationalism. In 1929 she was part of a joint deputation of Cheltenham women putting five questions on disarmament and peace to the borough's three parliamentary candidates.⁵⁴ In 1932, as

⁵² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 23 March 1923, p.4.

⁵³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 January 1922, p.2.

⁵⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 24 May 1929, p.1.

secretary for the Council of Equal Citizenship she led a plea to the borough member to support a strong lead from Britain at the Disarmament Conference.⁵⁵

As war approached she wrote to the *Gloucestershire Echo* expressing concerns with the lack of progress with disarmament and was critical that the League of Nations had been excluded from policy making.⁵⁶ Having called for the avoidance of a war against Germany, she was also critical of Chamberlain's policy of appeasement on the grounds that by giving way to dictators,

we are being taught every day more clearly to realise that the end of that game is oppression and shame, and the nation that plays it is lost.'⁵⁷

She argued that the target of Britain's policy should be the defeat of Hitler and Nazism but that care should be taken not to punish 'decent Germans' for whom the risks of opposing Hitler were great.⁵⁸ The humanitarian aspect of her internationalism (which brought her Liberalism very much in line with her LNU work) was also demonstrated by her calls on the government to take in refugees from Palestine and in her efforts to raise money for children in the occupied countries.⁵⁹

Unlike many of the 'old guard' who had set up the CLNU in the 1920s and who had either passed away or left the town, or indeed split with the LNU, Dorothea remained active in the branch to the bitter end and beyond. In February 1946 she was part of the CLNU committee that gave itself the task of setting up a new United Nations Association in the town. In April that year she was elected to the committee of the recently formed UNA, which was reported to be 'in a flourishing state,' and was re-elected in 1949.

Dorothea's role on the CLNU illustrates a number of key points. Despite the LNU's non-party stance, her membership shows that many of the town's Liberals felt at home within its ranks and felt

⁵⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 1 November 1932, p.3.

⁵⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 5 July 1934, p.4 and 10 March 1938, p.4.

⁵⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 22 October 1938, p.4.

⁵⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 September 1941, p.4.

⁵⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 2 March 1943, p.6.

a common sense of purpose with the League's aims. However, and in common with the conservative Edith Geddes, Dorothea's role with the CLNU coupled a sense of internationalism with an equally strong sense of humanitarianism, whether it be in raising funds for the town's poor (such as female imbeciles at the workhouse) or in making provision for the civilian victims of war.⁶⁰

In her role as propaganda officer she exemplifies how the LNU prioritised education as one of its main purposes. As important as recruitment was, just as important for Dorothea was that the wider public should be educated and informed enough on matters of foreign affairs to guide and, if needs be, question their government's conduct of them. Typical of her argument was one that she made to a meeting at Cowley Manor in 1922 when talking about the recent Greco-Turkish quarrel,

[she] thought that the peoples of Great Britain, France, and Italy were to blame for not having insisted that their governments would refer the Greco-Turkish quarrel to the League before it became acute and involved the Great Powers; she pointed out that it is folly to wait to extinguish a fire until it develops into a great blaze.⁶¹

The role in educating the public was one that Dorothea identified with very closely. In 1929 she proposed taking on a similar role for the town's Liberals. Her aim was to bring together party members, women, and young Liberals to consider ways in which they could promote a better discussion and education on political matters.⁶²

⁶⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 29 July 1920, p.4 and 12 October 1943, p.2.

⁶¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 October 1922, p.5.

⁶² Gloucestershire Archives: D15946/1. Cheltenham Liberal Association Minute Book. December 1929-1931. Miss Jordan proposed and served on the local Liberal Association Propaganda Committee and presented regular reports to the Association.

c. Barbara Thomas 1892-1981

An active and outspoken supporter of the CLNU was Barbara Thomas. Born in Liverpool, she was the daughter of a Unitarian minister who was a British subject born in Colombo, Ceylon. The family were much travelled and before she arrived in Cheltenham in 1923, she had spent time in Switzerland recovering from a bout of TB. Although her father professed 'not to like churches' ⁶³ the family was a religious one and it was no surprise that she became a minister, ordained into Cheltenham Bayshill Unitarian Church in 1926 after being a preacher there for three years.

Her arrival in the town was accompanied by a strong sense of purpose that she exhibited all her life. Attendance at Bayshill had dwindled before the war to the point that it had been closed for some time. Undeterred by what to some seemed a hopelessly moribund cause, she announced her intention to rebuild the church and resume services as she felt there was still a strong Unitarian community within the town. In her welcome speech she also hinted at a broader message not just to rebuild the church but a wider community,

She admired either a good sturdy Liberal, Conservative or a Labour man; but found it very difficult to admire the person who was good at carrying out nothing. People who had as much to be thankful for, ought to care about what their Government was doing and ought to worry about it. The Christian life.... did not mean blinding ourselves or making ourselves deaf, betraying the witnesses of our senses or shutting ourselves away in a fool's paradise, devoting ourselves to ease and self-indulgence, shirking all effort and trial. The kind of Christians they wanted to grow at Bayshill was the kind who helped other people because 'they liked helping other people, and who were fair to other people because they loved justice and fairness.'⁶⁴

⁶³ Obituary in *The Inquirer*, 11 July 1981.

⁶⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 17 November 1923, p.1.

She at first supported the town's Liberals – possibly as there was no Labour candidate then. In 1923 she attended a meeting in support of a Mr Plaidstowe, the town's Liberal candidate, and by 1925 she was vice-president of the Liberal Association and treasurer for the Young Liberals. However, in 1926 she began to drift towards the Labour Party (particularly for its support for the Peace movement) and by 1929 was acting in support of their candidate, a Mr Piggott. In 1935, she caused a certain amount of concern by inviting Mrs. Pakenham, the then Labour candidate, to preach at Bayshill. In reply to an anonymous letter in the press she made it clear that,

We were glad to welcome her to our pulpit and grateful for her service, not alone because she is a daughter of two distinguished Unitarian families, nor alone because of her fine work for peace and the League of Nations, but chiefly because of her personal witness to a religious vocation in modern social problems. My pulpit has not in my time been used for party propaganda, either by myself or by anyone else. On the other hand, we do not hold that adherence to a political party disqualifies us for sincere inquiry into the will of God.⁶⁵

Beyond the walls of her church, she was more open about her support for Labour and when Mrs Pakenham gave a talk on Labour's plan to make banks 'the property of the nation' and prevent the over-capitalization of certain industries to restore benefit to those in need, Barbara Thomas appealed to women to act in this election and reminded them that,

Women were in the majority. Some still thought elections were a man's job, others that in times of crises and panic such as the Great War, women were desperately anxious to do something but were helpless. Now, when there was a crisis but no panic, power was in the women's hands.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 November 1935, p.4.

⁶⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 7 November 1935, p.5.

In 1937, responding to a call for more Labour candidates in local elections, she stood for the town's Pittville ward stating that 'it was right there should be some representation of the wage-earning class, who have known or are in danger of poverty.'⁶⁷ In spite of a swing towards Labour, her attempt to defeat Harold Avery (the Chamber of Commerce candidate) was defeated by over 500 votes. Undeterred, she stood again for Pittville in 1945. Again, along with three other candidates from her Bayshill congregation, she was defeated. In an address to her Bayshill congregation, although remaining stoic, she made clear her disappointment saying, 'that they [the four members who had stood as Labour candidates] were not proud of Cheltenham for standing almost alone in its refusal to join the onward march of England into the new world'.⁶⁸

She tried a third time in 1946 when she stood for the Lansdown Ward, in which there was a straight fight between Conservative and Labour candidates, but this too resulted in an 'easy win' for her rival, a Mr Waite.⁶⁹ Although her attempts to be elected onto local government met with disappointment there was some success for her when in 1949 it was announced that her name was being added to a list of 29 new magistrates for Gloucestershire. The *Gloucestershire Echo* noted in its report that as a minister of Bayshill Unitarian Church since 1923, 'her tenure of the office has far exceeded that of any other minister and that in local affairs she has taken keen and energetic interest'.⁷⁰

Despite her claims not to politicise the pulpit, she took a number of opportunities to use her position as minister to promote the work of the League of Nations. The archive of Rev. Thomas's papers at Harris Manchester College, Oxford, contains a handwritten list of the fourteen sermons she delivered at Bayshill on topics related to the League of Nations and the United Nations. Some were on general themes such as peace and disarmament, whilst two at least were specifically about the work of the

⁶⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 October 1937, p.3.

⁶⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 6 November 1945, p.6.

⁶⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 5 December 1946, p.1.

⁷⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 8 March 1949, p.1.

League. The first of these on 'The League of Nations' although undated was given around the mid-1920s, whilst a later one entitled 'The Plain Man and the League of Nations' was delivered in June 1932. In her earlier sermon she posited a view of the League that was very much based on a clear sense of duty and rational common sense for all. She argued that the world had a choice between destructive forces of difference and disunity (patriotism) or a fundamental righteousness of unity,

That is what the League of Nations is. It is an experiment, set in the clear hard reality of the world of actual experience and obvious differences, set up on the hypothesis that there is a fundamental unity binding us into a whole, deeper than all the differences which we see and know. It's just because those differences are so largely represented that it is a practical test and so has a special value which no individual theory or private adventure can have.⁷¹

In her later sermon, delivered in advance of a visit by Sir Norman Angell to the town, she stated to her congregation that even if the 'radiant sanity called common sense' was missed by the learned and powerful, the plain man should easily recognise it and see it reflected in the work of the League. She exhorted her congregation not just to go and hear Sir Norman Angell but also to acquaint themselves with all matters of foreign policy and not to be deterred by the endless complications expressed by politicians. For her, the pursuit of peace was a common sense obtainable to her eponymous 'Plain Man', so long as people made the effort to educate themselves,

The long patient study of facts is necessary; it is impossible to act justly where nothing is known: but the long difficult investigation of international problems must be able to rely on common sense decisions by the ordinary hard-worked and much occupied citizens of the nations. If from their hard work and many occupations they have learned no sense, then they will be silly and say: 'for certain we don't want war, but neither will we support efforts to

⁷¹ Harris Manchester College Archives, Oxford: uncatalogued collection of Barbara Thomas' papers in boxes MH 1-8. Boxes contain handwritten copies of Rev. Thomas' sermons preached at Bayshill.

[organise] peace: we will leave things to muddle along and curse blindly when the explosions which have happened in the past happen again'.⁷²

Although her support for peace and disarmament was made apparent in her sermons, as well publicised as they were, the fact is that she was preaching to a congregation of a little more than forty. As important as her work as a minister was in her promotion of peace, it was as much her roles in the town's branches of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the League of Nations Union that brought her to the attention of a wider audience.

Barbara Thomas was an active and outspoken member of the WILPF for well over a decade. The town's branch of the WILPF had come into being in 1925 and her first recorded association with it was in February 1927 when she chaired a meeting held at the YMCA at which an address was given by Miss Dorothy Woodman – a leading official of the League in London. With typical forthrightness, Barbara Thomas laid out to her audience the reasons why peace was something that all had a duty to campaign for,

it seemed to her a perfectly obvious thing nowadays to join all peace societies.... in trying to educate public opinion there seemed a definite job to be done and that was to bring community feelings up to the standard which had been reached in individuals. Our system of dealing with our neighbours, individuals, seemed to quite definitely be one stage higher than the methods adopted when it came to nations.⁷³

A second meeting that year was held at the town hall and was addressed by the WILPF chair, Miss K. D. Courtney. It was noted that despite its brief existence, the local branch had made good progress. For the next few years, the WILPF held regular meetings and discussed such topics as disarmament, the threat of a war in the air and the possibility of sanctions against Italy. Press reports

⁷² Harris Manchester College Archives, Oxford: Barbara Thomas Papers. Box 4. Sermons.

⁷³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 3 February 1927, p.5.

named Barbara Thomas as the WILPF's president, and she often chaired its meetings. In 1933 she announced that she was regretfully resigning her position owing to a great pressure of work, although her interest was as keen as ever. This was borne out by the fact that throughout the 1930s she continued as a vice-president, often spoke at meetings and frequently appeared in the correspondence pages of the local press. In October 1933 she addressed a second of three meetings held by the WILPF on the topic of 'peace' in which she criticised governments in indirectly promoting war through their support of the armaments industry.⁷⁴

By 1934 though, the WILPF was reporting fewer members and a shortage of funds. Undeterred, she pushed for even more vigorous action, extolling individual members to 'be prepared to antagonise popular emotions of nationalism' on the grounds that 'politics really did interfere with our daily lives and had the power to get us into a fearful mess'.⁷⁵ As the decade progressed she expressed increasing disapproval of the actions of the government and in 1938 called for a petition to recall Mr Eden in order to oppose any further assistance to Italy and to impose sanctions on her. A year later, again frustrated by what she saw as a lack of clarity in government policy, she argued that if a war was to be fought then,

we should try to make clear to the world the sort of aims we should like to pledge ourselves to in the war — if necessary, over the heads of our Government. Lord Dickenson, of the League of Nations Union, hoped that the organisation would hold together so as to be ready to re-organise the League of Nations after the war.⁷⁶

Such comments did not necessarily advocate civil disobedience but were very much in line with her moral stance in which goodness was more readily to be found in individuals than in states. Above all it stressed the importance of the individual's conscience in foreign policy and the need for all to

⁷⁴ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 14 October 1933, p.7.

⁷⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 25 January 1934, p.6.

⁷⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 20 October 1939, p.3.

educate and involve themselves in such decision making – particularly if the mistakes of the past were not to be repeated. It therefore comes as little surprise that she became an active member of the town's LNU branch.

Her association with the CLNU began when she first arrived in Cheltenham in 1923. Following her recovery from a serious bout of TB and recuperation in Switzerland, her first attempt to find employment was to enquire about a possible job with the LON Secretariat. Amongst her skills she listed German (good) and French (not so good), the ability to write shorthand in both and clerical qualifications she had acquired whilst working for the Cotton Research Council.⁷⁷ Her attempts to find employment with the LON were not successful, but she soon made contact with the local branch. She was part of the platform party at the 'great meeting' which took place in November 1923 at which Sir W. Dickinson gave a notable speech on the League's aims to a large and enthusiastic audience.⁷⁸ Over the next decade she was a frequent speaker herself on the League, either at its own meetings or those held by her study group at Bayshill Church.

As with her sermons, Barbara Thomas saw it as very much her moral duty to inform others of the way to peace, but equally the duty of active citizens to seek out information for themselves so that they could challenge government on such issues. In 1925 her series of lectures on the Geneva Protocol and the applications of sanctions raised several important points for the ensuing discussion. Those taking part in the Bayshill Adult School study group expressed appreciation of the very instructive manner in which Miss Thomas had introduced her subject.⁷⁹ The interconnectivity of her particular networks was also demonstrated in that the LON was frequently the subject of her addresses and discussion with the WILPF. Typical of such collaborations was a house-to-house canvass of the town organised in 1931 under the auspices of its Cheltenham Branch - the object

⁷⁷ Harris Manchester College Archives, Oxford: Barbara Thomas Papers Box 6. Correspondence concerning a potential position with the LON secretariat.

⁷⁸ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 17 November 1923, p.6.

⁷⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 May 1925, p.6.

being to further awareness of the World Disarmament Declaration Campaign. At a joint conference, three members of the League of Nations, the No More War Movement, and the Women's International League respectively were chosen to call together an ad hoc committee to carry out the canvas.⁸⁰

In 1935 she took part in what was referred to as The Cheltenham Debate, with the then president of the CLNU, Daniel Lipson – the resolution being that ‘this meeting does not support the proposal for an international police force’. She spoke against the resolution arguing that even after fifteen years' work for peace the nations were still not yet disarmed - partly because France would not concede equality to Germany and partly because Britain would not give France collective security. Her view was that a more robust approach was now needed to enforce peace-making to go faster. This would of course be supplemented with educational work, but it was important to put force behind law so as to give people confidence and let them have a chance to develop the peace mind.⁸¹

In the event, she lost the vote by a large majority but it can be seen as a growing divide within the ranks of the LNU between those who wished to preserve peace through appeasement and those who favoured a more active defence of it. Her stance on such matters became even more apparent in 1936 when in her attacks on Italy's treatment of Abyssinia she called for a more vigorous application of sanctions,

It is becoming clearer and clearer to us that the organisation of peace has to be as efficient and productive as is the organisation of war. The majority of people in this country believed in using force to defend themselves when attacked. It was just as right and reasonable to use force in collective defence.⁸²

⁸⁰ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 20 June 1931, p.2.

⁸¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 21 February 1935, p.6.

⁸² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 6 July 1936, p.6.

Such views did not find favour amongst many of the CLNU who felt that this approach could just as easily lead Europe once more to war. However, despite her criticisms and a sense of shame felt towards the League's failure to make any headway with disarmament, she continued to see it as the most effective way to preserve peace, so long as it was prepared to take action against would-be aggressors – 'after all, world condemnation counted for something, and Japan and Germany might later have to come into step with the rest of the nations'.⁸³

Throughout 1938, her voice was frequently heard through the letter pages of the local press, often provoking robust responses from others. In February 1938 she wrote,

The loss of the Foreign Secretary [Eden] appears to be the worst blow yet struck at the policy of appeasement through the League of Nations. It represents the open abandonment by Great Britain of the League system and a condoning of the fruits of aggression. If the people who through the Peace Ballot placed Anthony Eden in power again assert themselves, the cause of international justice may yet be saved... this is not a matter of party, but of principle which appeals to people of all parties.⁸⁴

Judging by the response, her views were not shared by the majority of those corresponding to the Editor. The prevailing view was that Eden's resignation was no loss and that a new approach was called for – 'the practical realism of the Prime Minister rather than in the Utopian idealism of Mr Eden.'⁸⁵ This was supported by a view that Britain had little to gain from continued membership of the LON and that an isolationist policy would be a more effective means of avoiding being dragged into war. She argued that the League represented the rule of law, and in all cases, the law must be upheld against transgressors. However, as many supporters of the League were to find, when it came to enforcing this law the bonds of collective security were increasingly being tested by self-interest.

⁸³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 18 March 1937, p.6. Quoted from Rev. Thomas's speech.

⁸⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 26 February 1938, p.4.

⁸⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 28 February 1938, p.4. Letter from 'Charlex'.

She was aware of this shift in the public mood but remained unaffected in her role as educator of the public. In her message to all those who had written against her, she offered,

If the writers will continue to join in "co-operative thinking" on these issues, not only in the Press, but through all the other means available, League of Nations Union discussions, etc., I am convinced they will be giving extremely valuable service to their generation in the great task of our time.⁸⁶

Her next series of letters came later in the year, as Germany invaded Czechoslovakia and Britain signed the Munich agreement. Daniel Lipson had previously attempted to justify the settlement as one of benefit to the Czechs – a notion that she now attacked as being a complete disaster, not just for the Czechs but for Britain as well, as,

it will pay Hitler to be angry so long as we are willing to appease him, and consequently moral blindness and heartlessness to his victims is more dangerous to this country than Hitler and all his armaments'.⁸⁷

Once again, though, the prevailing view of the majority of those who wrote in answer to her letter was that it was a good thing that war had been avoided and that 'the Czechs are undoubtedly a fine people, and should be able to work out their own salvation under the new conditions'.⁸⁸

With the onset of war, whilst continuing to denounce the failures of the LON, she spoke increasingly about a new beginning for it – a New Commonwealth. At an LNU meeting in Bourton-on-the-Water, she did not seek to minimise the extent in which the League had failed in its main objective – the preservation of peace – but she pointed out the ways in which it had succeeded in forwarding the social welfare of the world. She felt that a Federal Union would be a necessity after the war.⁸⁹ This

⁸⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 1 March 1938, p.4.

⁸⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 17 December 1938, p.4.

⁸⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 23 December 1938, p.4.

⁸⁹ The Federal Union of democratic states was launched in November 1938. By June 1940, it had recruited 12,000 members and had 225 branches throughout the country.

opinion was not shared with some others in the CLNU.⁹⁰ Before the war, she had been a staunch pacifist, but she had now changed her views, realising that force must be used in aiding the defenceless and protecting the weak against a force which was definitely evil.⁹¹

Barbara Thomas continued serving as vice-president in the CLNU up to 1944. Her name does not appear on a list of members for the newly formed town branch of the UNA but her support for it was made apparent in other ways. As leader of a church discussion group, ‘she spoke of the present opportunity of ending war and of building up a new world as more hopeful than ever before.’⁹²

Her profile as a pacifist, nonconformist minister, and Labour supporter made her a natural ally of the LNU. Furthermore, her desire to create educated and aware citizens able to challenge their government on issues of foreign policy very much supports the notion of the LNU as a means of ‘persuading Britain’s quiet citizens to recognise foreign affairs as their own intimate concern’.⁹³ Her active support of the LON also exemplifies that group of women interwar peace activists who did not self-identify with feminism.⁹⁴ Her role with the CLNU shows a much wider interconnected network embracing several organisations – in her case, the WILPF, the Labour Party and the Bayshill Church. However, whilst these could be in agreement with each other there could also be tensions – such as her increasing disagreement with Daniel Lipson over appeasement and sanctions.

Summary of Case Studies

Despite a conspicuous absence of women in the leadership of the CLNU, the three case studies show that women played active roles in the functioning of the branch – not least in recruiting and education. The political allegiances of the three women show that the League operated in a non-

⁹⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 February 1941, p.3. At a CLNU meeting on the topic of the Federal Union, Mr. A. G. Dye said that he saw no necessity for one as the Covenant of the League would be quite adequate for the solution of post-war problems, if properly applied and enforced.

⁹¹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 13 April 1940, p.4.

⁹² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 4 October 1946, p.3.

⁹³ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.253.

⁹⁴ Beaumont, C., ‘Women’s Organisations, Active Citizenship and the Peace Movement: New Perspectives on Female Activism in Britain, 1918-1939’, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 31:4 (2020), pp.697-721.

partisan way and that a particular party loyalty was not a hurdle to joining. Dorothea was a very active Liberal within the town, Barbara Thomas made her allegiance to the Labour Party very clear and although she stood as an independent councillor, Edith was at heart a Tory. To a lesser extent the three also reflect a mixed social range in the membership of the LNU. Edith came from a wealthy military family, Dorothea's family were in trade and Barbara Thomas's religious background was from humbler origins in Liverpool.⁹⁵ However, it is also the case that very few working-class women figured in the leadership of the branch – wealth and familial status were still dominant factors.

For all three, their membership of the CLNU sat alongside a wider network of women's and pacifist organisations. Between them, their range of affiliations included: Save the Children Fund; Women's Citizens' Association; National Vigilance Association; The Women's International League of Peace and Freedom; The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; the Anti-Vivisection League. A point of contact between all three though, is that at various times each held the post of International and Peace representative for the town's local branch of the National Council for Women – Edith in 1930, Dorothea in 1933 and Barbara Thomas in 1937.⁹⁶

For them, peace did not just mean the absence of war, but it was also the way to a better life – particularly but not exclusively for women. Edith's work as a town councillor and her support for homecrofting showed a desire to improve the nation's quality of life and put it back on track after the sufferings of war. As a Liberal, Dorothea campaigned for electoral reform and saw the League as much an instrument to further democracy as to maintain peace. As with many of the founders of the WILPF, Barbara Thomas saw the quest for peace as part of a much wider duty for all citizens (particularly women) to undertake and in doing so, to challenge those in government to act responsibly, with accountability and to improve the lives of the nation.⁹⁷ For each of them the LNU,

⁹⁵ Barbara's father was also a Unitarian minister and probate on his death in 1917 listed his effects at £120 2s 8d.

⁹⁶ Gloucestershire Archives: D4595 3/2/2. National Council of Women, Cheltenham Branch Minute Book and list of members, 1921-28.

⁹⁷ Foster, C., *Women for All Seasons. The Story of the WILPF* (Athens and London, 1989), pp.9-16.

by encouraging nations to co-operate and work together, was a means that society could be helped and enabled to progress to a better standard of living for all.

Other Ranks

Whilst women were relatively scarce amongst the leadership of the CLNU, they were not when it came to membership. Analysis of the 1933, 1934 and 1939 annual reports with their attached lists of subscribers show that unmarried and married women made up between 63% and 65% of the membership.⁹⁸ Even allowing for an imbalance of women over men within the town, which had existed since the end of the war, these figures represent a higher proportion of women over men as members. A possible reason for this imbalance might be that 84% of men were economically active in 1931 whereas 63% of the women were economically inactive – thereby allowing more time for participation in branch activities.⁹⁹ Minutes of meetings of the local branches of the WILPF, the National Council of Women and the women's section of the Liberal Association all give evidence of politically interested and active groups of women within the town.¹⁰⁰

Support for the League from the town's women is also to be found in the pages of the local press. From 1919 the *Cheltenham Looker-On* featured a section entitled 'From a woman's point of view', purportedly written by an anonymous female correspondent, which sought to give a woman's perspective on local and national stories. In April 1920 it suggested to its female readership that 'the League of Nations would make a good topic for a public debate for the Women's Citizen's Association.'¹⁰¹ In June, in advance of the visit of Maude Royden to speak on behalf of the League, it asked the question,

⁹⁸ Cheltenham Library: CW/63G323.3CHE. CLNU Annual Reports 1933 & 1934. Gloucestershire Archives: PQ6.4GS. CLNU Annual Report 1939.

⁹⁹ GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, Cheltenham District through time - Population Statistics - Males and Females: <http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10168284/cube/GENDER> Date accessed: 5 April 2022. Figures for the Cheltenham District for 1831 indicate that 58% of the population of the town were female

¹⁰⁰ Gloucestershire Archives: D4595/3/2/2. National Council of Women, Cheltenham Branch Minute Book, and D15946/1 Minute Book of Cheltenham Liberal Association.

¹⁰¹ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 10 April 1920, p.21.

The League of Nations is in its infancy. We men and women of England should see that it is well and wisely nurtured. It offers the greatest hope yet given to mankind of avoiding the horrors of war. All the forces of greed and selfishness are against it. But the greater the opposition the sterner should be our resolve to uphold it. What is Cheltenham doing in this matter? Cheltonians can at least join the League of Nations Union. Are they doing so in their thousands? And if not, why not?¹⁰²

After the closure of the *Looker-On* in 1920, its 'From a woman's point of view' page was incorporated into the columns of the *Cheltenham Chronicle* which continued reporting on matters of interest to women for the next three years. Their correspondent was Miss Kate Eyre, who as a member of the CLNU, often wrote on LON activities to a female audience.¹⁰³

In a post-suffrage era, many Cheltenham women were politically informed and took an active role in several causes. However, in the case of the CLNU, it is a somewhat harder task to determine exactly what the role of individual women members was – hidden, as they were, within the plain sight of their anonymity. A few stand out with particular mention, such as Mrs Annie Briggs – wife of Joshua, the honorary secretary of the CLNU for many years. At her funeral service it was recorded that,

Mrs. Briggs was a much-respected resident of Cheltenham, and, although of a quiet nature, she took a great interest in the affairs of the town. She gave a great deal of support to Mr. Monro Briggs in the honorary offices he held for many years in connection with the Cheltenham branch of the League of Nations' Union.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 26 June 1920, p.21.

¹⁰³ Kate Eyre was honorary secretary to the Cheltenham Women Citizens' Association and later became a founder committee member of the Prestbury Branch of the LNU.

¹⁰⁴ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 25 November 1939, p.5.

One area where women were most active in promoting the League was through education and in schools. A number of Cheltenham headmistresses served as vice-presidents on the CLNU committee and at both Cheltenham Ladies' College and Pate's Grammar School for Girls, (women) teachers were responsible for setting up junior branches within their school. Dorothea Jordan wrote literature on the League for women and Edith Geddes promoted LON literature on the town's Library Committee.¹⁰⁵ A decade later women played a significant role as door-knockers in the collection of data for the Peace Ballot of 1935.¹⁰⁶ However, the opportunities by which most women members could engage with the branch remained limited.

After 1919 although women had more opportunity to work as 'non-state actors' in transnational campaigning organisations, they still operated within separate spheres to men.¹⁰⁷ Their activism within the League was constrained by gendered assumptions such as limiting their roles to social and humanitarian issues and a social maternalism which used cartoons and pictures to feminise peace issues.¹⁰⁸ Although not specific to Cheltenham, an insight into attitudes towards women was given in a letter sent to the LNU's Education Committee complaining that their speakers often talked down to girls in senior classes who were 'well informed' on foreign matters.¹⁰⁹

Whilst there is no direct evidence that Cheltenham women felt patronised or excluded by the men folk of the branch it is difficult to gauge what they gained directly from their membership of the Union. Certainly, a few women with status or a strong personality such as Clara Winterbotham or the Rev. Barbara Thomas took a lead at meetings but otherwise there was little reported engagement

¹⁰⁵ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 13 March 1920, p.5 and 8 January 1921, p.6. Reports of Cheltenham Town Council.

¹⁰⁶ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.199.

¹⁰⁷ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.193.

¹⁰⁸ As witnessed by the various peace pageants held between 1925-7. *Gloucestershire Echo* 12 November 1925, p.3. The LON was portrayed by a *tableau vivant* in which fifty-two girls in white national scarves and bearing aloft national flags marched up to a queen of peace. A typical example from the LNU is found in *Headway* vol 17. No 2. February 1935.

¹⁰⁹ LSE: LNU 2/24. LNU Education Committee Minutes, 31 Oct 1930. Mrs Brough, representing the Association of University Women Teachers, relayed by the Women's Advisory Council.

from women members. One reason might have been that, even by its own admission, CLNU meetings could be rather dry affairs. An attempt to improve things was made in 1927 when,

Thursday's public meeting, under the auspices of the Cheltenham branch of the League of Nations Union, held at the SS. Philip & James' Institute, Leckhampton road, saw a welcome departure from the old dry-as-dust meeting in which oratory was prolix and often wearisome.¹¹⁰

However, the 'improvement' seems only to have been the introduction of some hymns and community singing.¹¹¹ Their relative lack of entertainment and engagement contrasts strongly with women-only gatherings such as the *conversazione* and study groups of the Women's Council and the tea, dances, and music that often accompanied WILPF meetings.¹¹² Unlike groups such as the Save the Children Fund or the numerous local charitable organisations seeking to improve the lives of others (hospital, maternity support, housing, ambulance etc.) the LNU offered little outlet to those women who were looking to give their philanthropy a more materialistic and engaged direction.

LNU policies could even provoke opposition from women who might otherwise have been their closest supporters. Theodora Flower Mills, a leading supporter of the suffrage campaign in town, after the war became a prominent member of the WILPF. As vice-president and press secretary she addressed study circles on issues of peace and disarmament, supplied the press with reports of meetings and contributed an on-going correspondence calling against war. She was a member of the Bayshill congregation and a close friend of Barbara Thomas. By all accounts she should have been a champion of the LNU.

¹¹⁰ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 October 1927, p.9.

¹¹¹ *Headway*, November 1930. The LNU announced it had published a collection of 20 hymns and tunes to be used at meeting together with hymn sheets on sale at 3s 3d per hundred.

¹¹² *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 17 January 1925, p.8. 'The annual meeting of the Cheltenham branch of the Women's League was held at the Bayshill Lecture Hall. It was followed by a social and tea, and by a delightful entertainment arranged by Mrs. Bond and Miss Lupton. Three couples in costume sang old English folk songs and danced folk dances, and in several well-known songs the whole audience joined. The crowning success was an Irish jig. Miss Carrie Williams (pianist) was specially thanked for her spirited playing.'

However, she split with the LNU over the issue of vivisection. The League tried to justify this practice in order to promote a wider knowledge of drugs and medicines for the benefit of mankind. Theodora Flower Mills, like many anti-vivisection campaigners, remained outspoken in her opposition. Her letter in 1923 to the former suffragist paper, *The Woman's Leader*, entitled 'Can we support the League?' concluded,

the main object of the League is to substitute peace for war, and it seems a far cry from that to the vivisector's laboratory. I do not wish to debate the actual right or wrong of the question here, but merely to point out that the League's sanction of vivisection is holding back a certain number of peace-loving humanitarian women from giving their wholehearted allegiance – or indeed, any support at all.¹¹³

We cannot tell what that 'certain number of peace-loving humanitarian women' was, but given that animal welfare figured in the aims of various women's' groups, there would have been others whose support for the LNU was likewise compromised.¹¹⁴

Spokeswomen and Torchbearers

A final group to be considered were those women who although not members of the CLNU themselves, played a part in promoting its work. It was often visiting women speakers who made a great impact in the town. Their national status and their presence brought both a greater visibility to the work of the CLNU and acted as a model for its women members. The most famous was Maude Royden who spoke at the Town Hall in the very early days of the formation of the local branch. Not only was Maude an ex-pupil of Cheltenham Ladies' College but she was a formidable public speaker. Much of her oratory was communicated in a gendered way and in 1920 she announced to a packed Town Hall audience that she would,

¹¹³ *The Woman's Leader*, 6 April 1923.

¹¹⁴ Gloucestershire Archives: D4595/1/2. NCW Cheltenham Branch List of members includes a committee member for Animal Welfare.

appeal to her own sex to exert influence on the side of the League. She had spent a considerable part of her life in trying to get political freedom for women, and it was an inspiring circumstance that, after securing political power, one of the first things that they had a chance of pushing forward was the cause that had brought this great meeting together.¹¹⁵

She added that when the Council of the League met the next month at Geneva, since all its posts were open to women, Great Britain would set an example in sending a woman as one of its three representatives. There was no doubt among those present that Maude Royden's 'burning eloquence' had been anything less than inspiring.¹¹⁶

Two years later the CLNU was addressed by another leading figure – Elizabeth Murray – one of the permanent officials of the Intelligence Section of the LNU and daughter of Professor Gilbert Murray who was ill at the time. The press report on her Town Hall address found her to be 'a most capable and attractive speaker' who spoke eloquently as to why the League had so far justified itself. Her analysis was considered insightful, and she was congratulated for the 'interesting and capable way she had communicated it to her audience.'¹¹⁷

Finally, and speaking to a younger audience (accustomed as they were to having male speakers), Ladies' College pupils were addressed by Miss Constance Smith, HM Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories, who drew on her experiences as a woman adviser to the British government delegates at Geneva. Not only did she state the importance of the work already done by the LON, but she spoke in more general terms of the value of collaboration and interdependence between nations and how working this way could find practical means to overcome all hurdles in its way. 'The war has shown us our interdependence, that one part of the world cannot suffer without the other part of the world

¹¹⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 30 September 1920, p.3.

¹¹⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 2 October 1920, p.5. Many of those who attended the 'remarkable' League of Nations meeting in the Town Hall and who supported the resolution [to approve the principles of the League] put to the meeting at the close of the speeches, 'must be wondering how to express in corresponding action the enthusiasm roused in them by Miss Maude Royden's burning eloquence.'

¹¹⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 7 March 1922, p.1.

suffering with it.’¹¹⁸ In effect, the students were not being told how they might ‘mother the nation’ but were being shown how they could become active and effective citizens of the world. As with the case of the other two speakers, although the message was being delivered by and directed towards women there was little in what they said that could be regarded as overtly ‘feminised.’

Summary

It has been argued that in terms of international relations after the First World War, although the input and influence of women was certainly growing, they still had to fall back on,

gendered articulations of peace, rooted in feminised metaphors that distinguished and marginalised them from the masculine realm of international relations.¹¹⁹

Whilst this is in part borne out by aspects of a ‘theatre of peace’, such as the CLNU’s peace pageants, it is also countered in that those women speaking in the CLNU did so by not just limiting themselves to humanitarian or social issues, but with equal authority on those topics that some have gendered as male, namely economic, diplomatic, or military.¹²⁰ Evidence suggests that women’s participation in the rank and file of the CLNU went beyond mere tokenism and in terms of membership alone was significant to the branch. Although women were conspicuously absent in the list of office holders there were other ways their views of foreign policy found expression, namely through: correspondence and women’s columns in the local press; by promoting a range of activities in girls’ schools; by acting as speakers to study groups and village societies; and in some cases, acting as representatives to national conferences.

¹¹⁸ CLC magazine, 1921 vol. 42

¹¹⁹ Hucker, D., ‘Allowed to Serve, Not to Speak’? The Role of Women in International Peace Activism, 1880-1920’, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 3 No.4 (2020), p.624.

¹²⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 12 May 1925, p.6. Bayshill Adult School. Miss Barbara Thomas continued her series of lectures on the League of Nations, and the school expressed its appreciation as to the very instructive manner in which Miss Thomas had introduced her subject.

However, the role of the CLNU in promoting opportunities for women as 'non-state actors' must be seen in context. The Union did not act exclusively to promote peace in the interwar years, and it should be set alongside and amongst a range of such women's groups as the WCA and the WILPF who also provided women with a ready and direct access for debate of foreign policy issues. The pursuit of peace was often seen as a prerequisite for women's groups who wished to set a much wider agenda in terms of improving the quality of life for others. For those women seeking to achieve this, the relative inertia and delay in decision making of the LON often compared poorly with the immediacy and active nature of campaigns based on direct action, such as that of the SCF. For many women activists, although willing to sign up to the general aims of the LON (and pay their annual subscription) the LNU provided relatively few opportunities to engage in practical activities. This could result in their focus drifting away from the CLNU into areas (such as Edith Geddes' Homecrofting scheme) where they felt a more immediate effect could be achieved.

Chapter 7 The CLNU and the Churches

This chapter considers the attitude of the churches, established and nonconformist, towards the LON and to what extent local religious figures and communities engaged in the work of the CLNU.

National Context

Whilst not always providing the levels of support the CLNU hoped for, religious organisations and associations (of all kinds) were considered important both to the LNU and its local branch.

Associationism of church communities still remained an important factor in the life of the nation.

The churches and chapels provided a ready access to established communities and the backing of their ministers would bring a degree of moral authority and guidance. This was a connection the CLNU set out to develop through its offer of corporate membership and by recruiting the support of local congregations.

However, against this has to be set a gradual secularization of British society which took place over the twentieth century. There is much debate within the historiography of this process but a general consensus is that it was not fully apparent in the 1920s.¹ At least one historian has argued that religious affiliations remained resilient despite a decline in church attendance.

The scale of decline in overall church membership between 1904-5 and 1950 was relatively minor. From a high of 19.3 per cent in 1910 for church membership in the British population as a whole, the figure fell to 19.1 in 1920, recovered to 19.2 in 1930 and then fell to 18.1 in 1930 – a fall sustained to 17.6 by 1950.²

Superficially, the relationship between religious bodies and the LNU appeared to be a strong one.

The Union generally received fulsome support from the churches and even when the movement was

¹ Morris, J., 'The Strange Death of Christian Britain: Another Look at the Secularization Debate', *The Historical Journal*, 46, 4 (2003), pp.963-976.

² Brown, C. G., *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000* (Routledge, 2nd edition, 2009), p.164.

making little political headway, as Birn points out, they provided it with 'its most sympathetic audiences'.³ As late as 1934, bishops at the Convocation of Canterbury reaffirmed support for the League, proclaiming it as 'the only effective means of protecting the principle of international justice against the tendencies of national aggression'.⁴

In return, the LNU presented itself as a practical means through which Christianity could engage with issues and problems left by the war. Announcing itself as ready to hand for all ministers of religion who represented the organised moral and spiritual forces of national life, it claimed to be able to harness the Christian dynamic to the formulas of the Covenant. This in turn would bring the ideals of the League within the sphere of popular acceptance and international achievement. Following the Lambeth Conference in 1920 the LNU sought broader support from the Churches, and argued that,

Suggestions for the formation of local branches of the League of Nations Union clearly lend themselves for acceptance and adaptation in connection with the Assemblies, Convocations, Synods, Presbyteries, Councils, Conferences, Chapters, Committees and other administrative organisations of the various religious communities. With those communities must also be associated those manifold societies and movements - missionary, social, or philanthropic - whose activities are inspired by Christian ideals and principles...It is hoped that every minister of religion and every leader of Brotherhoods, Y.M.C.A., etc., will urge the members of their congregations and meetings to join the Union.⁵

³ Birn, *The League of Nations Union*, p.135.

⁴ *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 7 June 1934, p.1.

⁵ LSE Digital Library: LNU/7/1. *Christianity and The League of Nations*, LNU Leaflets Nos. 9 and 9a, London 1920.

This mutual support called upon the whole Christian Church to act with one voice to promote the principles of the League and to pass a resolution that every church 'best assist the cause of the League of Nations by joining the LNU as a corporate member'.⁶

Whilst church leaders had often acted as supporters and promoters of a national patriotic zeal that led to the First World War, in its aftermath many saw the League as a means of seeking atonement or repentance for its horrors. The League offered an opportunity for a spiritual regeneration of a nation that had for too long, in the words of Charles Gore (Bishop of Oxford) pursued 'economic selfishness and narrow patriotism'.⁷ Although Free Church leaders, in particular, proved to be some of the most devoted of its cheerleaders, the League hoped to place itself as a unifying cause for believers of all denominations seeking the salvation of the nation. Through its corporate membership scheme (requiring ministers to preach sermons on the League and display LNU literature in their churches), the Union brought an important cross-section of churchgoers into its orbit. This not only allowed it to connect with thousands of congregations but also to create for itself a place in the official discourse of organised religion, 'whose force was felt far beyond the community of regular worshippers'.⁸

The close connections between the leaders of the LNU and prominent churchmen (for example, Cecil and Archbishops Davidson and Lang) were often replicated at a local level with churchmen forming the organisational backbone of many branches.⁹ LNU branch meetings held in church halls and vestries and beginning with prayers, together with corporate membership, gave evidence that the

⁶ *Headway*, October 1922, p.187. 'The League and the Churches'.

⁷ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.79. Quotes from Charles Gore's (Bishop of Oxford) pamphlet, *The League of Nations: The Opportunity of the Church* (London, 1918). See also Robbins, K., *England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales: The Christian Church 1900-2000* (OUP, 2011), p.147 and pp.234-5.

⁸ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.80, footnote 6. Cites an estimate that church membership in 1930 was around 10 million (29% of the adult population) from Peter Brierley, 'Religion', in *Twentieth Century British Social Trends*, ed. by Albert Halsey and Josephine Webb (Macmillan, 2000), p.654.

⁹ *Western Daily Press*, 31 December 1921, p.3. Lists twenty-four branches affiliated to the LNU's Bristol District Council. Discounting six which were schools or businesses, eight of the remaining sixteen local branches had a clergyman as their president or chair. In Gloucestershire, the first president of the CLNU was the town's Rector, Canon Wilson and clergymen presided or were prominent in Stroud, Gloucester, Winchcombe, Tewkesbury and Colesbourne branches.

spiritual power of the Church was very much ‘the ghost in the League machine’.¹⁰ Locally, the connection between the personal religious convictions of a number of leaders and their work as internationalists was exemplified by Willoughby Dickinson, MP for Stroud and later Baron Dickinson of Painswick. His liberal internationalism was based ‘on avowedly Christian ethics’ and he brought ‘a missionary zeal to his work as an international public advocate for the League’.¹¹

Language too helped form a connection between the churches and the League. In their speeches on foreign policy and in their reaction to the dictators, politicians such as Winston Churchill, Stanley Baldwin, Lord Halifax, Neville Chamberlain and Samuel Hoare often used a rhetoric that ‘contained strands of Christian faith to recruit support for government objectives’.¹² The same Christian language was frequently deployed by the LNU in service of the League with the same intent. Through such language the League sought to present itself as part of the nation’s spiritual salvation and in doing so, ‘struck deep chords with those searching for comfort after the collective trauma of the War’.¹³

However, although an established Christian faith remained strong amongst much of the nation, not least, as has been described as a ‘discursive Christianity’ (a Christianity based on propaganda and personal testimony) there are reasons why it did not always bring support for the LNU.¹⁴

Anglicanism with a strong association with (conservative) nationalism remained wary of liberal internationalism. At their Lambeth conference the bishops resolved that the road to internationalism lay through nationalism,¹⁵

¹⁰ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.80.

¹¹ Gorman, D., ‘Ecumenical Internationalism: Willoughby Dickinson, the League of Nations and the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 45,1 (2010), pp.51–73.

¹² Williamson, P., ‘Christian Conservatives and the Totalitarian Challenge, 1933–40’, *The English Historical Review*, 115, 462 (2000), pp.607–642.

¹³ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.95.

¹⁴ Morris, J., ‘The Strange Death of Christian Britain: Another Look at the Secularization Debate’, *The Historical Journal*, vol. 46, No. 4 (December 2003), pp. 963–976.

¹⁵ *The Six Lambeth Conferences 1867–1920* (SPCK, London, 1929), pp.33, 52.

Some prominent British Anglicans invested their hopes in the League, but only a very few saw it as portending the abolition of the nation states. When the League failed to avert another world war, Anglicans again rallied behind their nation's war efforts.¹⁶

Therefore, although it might have appeared that almost all thinking Christians believed in the League of Nations, clear differences in levels of support emerged. In his address to an Armistice Campaign meeting in 1929, Dr Lang (Archbishop of Canterbury) warned that,

There are regions and quarters within the Church of Christ where there seems to me to be a strange and inexplicable indifference to the cause for which the League of Nations stands. I have found here that there are some brothers, clergy of the Church of England, who look upon it with comparative indifference, if not with some suspicion.¹⁷

It has also been noted that an acceptance of the League's principles and, therefore, support for the LNU, was not universal amongst all British protestants. Opposition based on a belief in the second-coming, was at its most strident amongst premillenarian Evangelicals and fundamentalists, who regarded it as a distraction and a 'tower of Babel'.¹⁸ In one such group, the Panacea Society, Major Carew-Hunt (honorary secretary) listed 'Democratic Rule, Universal Suffrage and Internationalism' as devilish absurdities and as having no place in the coming administration.¹⁹

LNU success was more so in chapel than the Anglican church.²⁰ Often, nonconformist ministers were the first contact Union organisers would make in any town where they hoped to set up a new

¹⁶ Grimley, M., 'The State, Nationalism and Anglican Identities', in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism*, Volume IV, ed. by Jeremy Morris (Oxford, 2017), pp.117-136.

¹⁷ Swarthmore College Peace Collection Archive: League of Nations Union Collected Records, Box 5: Branches: Kensington, Kent, Oxford, Windermere, circa. 1920-1930. *The Kent Quarterly Journal*, 1929-30, p.2.

¹⁸ Ruotsila, M., 'The League of Nations Controversy among British Protestants', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 65, 2 (2014), 327-346. 'The debates of British Protestants over the meaning and desirability of the League of Nations were real, prolonged and significant.'

¹⁹ Shaw, J., *Octavia, Daughter of God: The Story of a Female Messiah and Her Followers* (Yale University Press, 2011), p.268. Octavia (the cult's female messiah) warned her followers not to read the *Daily Herald* as it spoke favourably of the LON.

²⁰ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.83, suggests that Free Churches outnumbered their Anglican counterparts by roughly five to one.

branch. In 1921 the Free Church Council launched a campaign to boost support for the LNU, expressing its conviction that ‘in the League of Nations lies the only hope of world peace’. A table of 2,656 enrolments of congregations in the Union for the year 1934 was topped by Methodists (805), then Congregationalists (529) with Anglicans placed third (511), and it was members of the Free Church who made up by far the largest number on the LNU’s Christian Organizations Committee.²¹

Catholics were generally more reluctant in their engagement with the LNU. Their support for the League was tested not least over disarmament, sanctions on Italy, the war in Spain and appeasement. In 1935, led by Archbishop Downey in Liverpool, the Catholic Church withdrew co-operation from an International Peace Campaign launched in France and supported by the LNU leadership. He and other leading Catholics claimed to have detected a ‘sinister connection’ between ‘alleged peace movements’ and communism. Shortly afterwards, other Catholics resigned from their local LNU branches.²² The reluctance of the Roman Catholic Church to associate itself with the work of the LNU has been explained, in part, by ‘profound anti-communism amongst Roman Catholic priests in Britain and mild fascist sentiments nursed by some elite Catholic thinkers’.²³

The practicalities of international relations in the 1920s and 1930s caused many pacifist groups to drift towards the ideals exemplified in part by the LNU. Some Quaker groups were prepared to show willing to unite with others in terms of finding new solutions and in particular how ‘personal religious intuitions could be expressed in institutional form.’²⁴ Bertram Pickard, a leading member of the Society of Friends, notably tried to steer Quakers towards internationalist and collaborative attempts to preserve peace through supporting the League of Nations.²⁵ More broadly, such

²¹ Birn, *The League of Nations Union*, p.137.

²² Robbins, K., (2008), pp. 236-7.

²³ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.91.

²⁴ Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain*, p.65. Also, Borthwick Institute for Archives, Joseph Rowntree Archive: JRCT/4/4/3. File relating to the LON Junior Summer School and Merttens Prize Essay Scheme, 1928-1936. (The Quaker Rowntree Foundation set up a £500 annual grant for Quaker schoolchildren to attend LON summer schools in Geneva).

²⁵ Waugh, M., ‘Quakers, Peace and the League of Nations: The Role of Bertram Pickard,’ *Quaker Studies*, 6, 1, Article 4 (2002), pp.59-79. Article cites from his obituary in *The Friend* 131 (29 June 1973), pp.773-74 – ‘he probably did as much as any man of his generation to educate Friends throughout the world to think internationally and to understand both the value and the limitations of the League of Nations’.

sentiments led to support for the LNU from a number of otherwise disparate religious groups opposed to war.

Despite LNU efforts to recruit non-Christian groups (such as Jewish Synagogues), especially in terms of its corporate members, they rarely appeared amongst the Union's most active bodies.

Although Jews looked to the LNU to further the cause of the Palestine mandate, it was a thorny issue that many in the League wished to steer clear of. However, in those places where the LNU did establish closer relations with Jewish communities, as McCarthy points out, they often became 'a significant non-Christian minority associated with the movement'.²⁶

Cheltenham's Churches ²⁷

The beginnings of the CLNU witnessed a close cooperation between the LNU and the town's religious bodies. From the branch's inception in 1920 its Presidency was held by the town's Rector - first, Rev. H.A. Wilson and then in 1926, when Wilson retired, by Rev. L.G.M. Sheldon. At an early CLNU town hall meeting addressed by Sir Hugh Cecil, Rev. Wilson made clear his reasons for supporting the League,

The war was a thing vomited from the very mouth of hell. It had to be, and it had to be seen through, but it had achieved nothing, for nothing could be achieved by war.... The League could be the policeman of Europe if the great nations of the world were enthusiastic for it. Not only might it prevent war, but it might mitigate the inequalities and follies in the peace that had been signed. The League was their only hope.²⁸

²⁶ McCarthy, *The British People*, pp.92-3. Notes that the number of synagogues affiliated to the Union peaked at 66 in 1930.

²⁷ For an overview of Cheltenham's religious history see *Victoria County History*, Gloucestershire, 15 (online draft). <https://www.history.ac.uk/sites/default/files/gloucestershire-cheltenham-religious-history.pdf> . Date accessed: 19/07/2023.

²⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 28 February 1920, p.5.

Support not only came from the established churches. In 1921 the newly formed CLNU held its first public meeting which included the Bishop of Gloucester, the Rev. Father Ryan (a Benedictine), Rev. F. Wynn (president of the Free Church Council), and Mr D. L. Lipson (Jewish). All proclaimed their support for the League and were congratulated by the editor of the *Gloucestershire Echo* for their efforts in coming together,

There was a great attendance of townspeople of all creeds and parties; there was complete unanimity of feeling; the speeches were eloquent and forcible; and the platform was exceptionally representative.... We hardly remember quite such a “mixed lot” at a local gathering before.... Thus, the platform indicated the existence of a league of religions.²⁹

This support continued throughout the decade with local Church leaders often linking the work of the League and Union with Christianity and demonstrating that the two were comfortable allies in the struggle for peace. This view was often expressed when men of the cloth spoke at Union meetings such as in 1924 when the Rev. Flecker (Headmaster of Dean Close School) addressing a CLNU meeting commented that ‘the fundamental conceptions of the Covenant of the League expressed the ideals of Christianity’.³⁰ In 1923, the Rector (Rev. Wilson) in his address to the branch, had spoken out against those elements of the press who had ‘deliberately set themselves to hold up to ridicule the great Christian statesmen who were endeavouring to reorganise international politics on a Christian basis’.³¹ However, such support for the Union was not universal or always so fulsome from the town’s religious bodies.

²⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 February 1921, p.1.

³⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 February 1924, p.3.

³¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 December 1923, p.2.

a. Anglican Churches

By 1851 Cheltenham already had seven Anglican churches with more to be added shortly in order to accommodate the growing size of the town's expanding population.³² These provided a significant source of potential support for the LNU. However, whilst local Anglican church leaders were willing to state their general endorsements of the League's principles, they rarely referred to the actual workings of the League and its achievements. In contrast to their public oratory, their hands-on support for the Union was limited. On many occasions the Bishop of Gloucester sent his apologies for his non-attendance and over time, of those platform parties on the stage at public meetings, the clergy were significantly outnumbered by the non-clergy. Likewise, subsequent meetings of the CLNU took place not in church halls but in schools, the local YMCA, and rooms at the Town Hall. At an early debate held at the Grammar School on the role of the LON, Mr Lipson pointed out that so far support from church congregations had been limited,

He lamented the apathy that was shown towards the League by the churches in this country. The professed adherents of the churches numbered something like 7,000,000, yet membership of the League of Nations was approximately only about 160,000. He thought they were justified in saying that the churches have failed, and failed miserably, to awaken in their adherents the importance and urgency of the principles and the work for which the League stood.³³

There was a prevailing sense among some CLNU committee members that the Church was not giving its full support and they 'regretted that it could not yet be said that the Christian conscience

³² Munden, A., *The Anglican Churches and Clergy of Cheltenham* (Gloucester, 2024). Of the new churches built in the 19th century to accommodate Cheltenham's expanding population some held congregations of up to 1000: Holy Trinity, St John's, St James', Christ Church, St Mark's, All Saints and St Stephen's, as well those in neighbouring parishes, SS Philip and James (Leckhampton) and Holy Apostles (Charton Kings).

³³ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 18 February 1922, p.2.

was behind the League'.³⁴ It took a letter to the local press from Monro Briggs (CLNU honorary secretary), to remind the clergy and ministers of all denominations,

that the first meeting of the Assembly at Geneva, November 10th, is of such worldwide importance that it is the wish of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Free Church Councils that Sunday next should be observed as a special day of prayer and intercession for the deliberations of this new Parliament of the World.³⁵

Active support for the CLNU came from a few local leaders in the Anglican church but across the town it was, at best, measured. Christ Church was one of only two Anglican churches that became corporate members of the CLNU.³⁶ The leading force there was its Vicar, Canon F.W. Webb-Peploe, who served on the CLNU's committee for much of the 1920s. Perhaps some indication that the congregation also felt support for the LNU was shown in 1937 when it appointed a new vicar. The Council chose a Rev. Cursey, whose views they felt were very much in accord with their own. Before arriving at Cheltenham, Cursey had served as president of his Southport LNU branch. Although an important factor, the presence of prominent CLNU members within a clergy or congregation did not alone guarantee a move to corporate status.³⁷ The only other Anglican church to become a corporate member of the CLNU was St Matthew's.³⁸ However, in both cases there seems little recorded consequence to being a corporate member – a single reference to a donation of 10s 6d to the LON from the church alms fund is all that is found in either set of minutes.

The Anglican clergy often remained ready to affirm their general support for the League – particularly on formal occasions, such as Rev. Sheldon's 1932 address at a special church service

³⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 7 March 1922, p.1.

³⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 November 1920, p.3.

³⁶ Gloucestershire Archives: P78/3/VE/2/2. Christ Church Parochial Church Council Minute Book. On 14 May 1925 on the recommendation of the Finance Committee it was resolved to join as a corporate member and the secretary was instructed to report this decision to Mr Monro Briggs and send the subscription of £1.

³⁷ Gloucestershire Archives: P78/2/VE/2/1. For example, All Saints Vestry Committee Minutes contain no reference to the LON or CLNU despite the presence of Monro Briggs and other leading CLNU members.

³⁸ Gloucestershire Archives: P78/1/VE/2/1. St Matthew's Parochial Church Council Minute Book.

held during the LNU General Council's conference in Cheltenham.³⁹ However, the churches rarely fully endorsed its operations and achievements and the majority chose not to become corporate members of the CLNU. Furthermore, some leading churchmen became critics of the League. One such was the Bishop of Gloucester, Arthur Headlam, and his views will be discussed later.

b. Nonconformists

By contrast to the measured reception from the established churches, the CLNU found considerable support from the town's nonconformists. From the early years of the branch these groups were active in holding meetings, setting up discussion groups and forming sub-branches. For example, in 1920 the Cheltenham Central Brotherhood held a meeting at the North Street Picture Palace at which the Right Hon. T. McKinnon Wood, (former Secretary for Scotland), gave an address on 'What the League of Nations means to Europe'.⁴⁰ Such meetings of the Brotherhood remained a frequent occurrence in the early 1920s. Similarly, support from the town's nonconformists was demonstrated by the many meetings that were hosted by chapels, Baptist halls, and Free Church groups.

Nonconformists' support for the Union was also evidenced by the number who became corporate members of the local branch. By 1932 they outnumbered the Anglican churches by three to one and included Baptists, Unitarians, Congregationalists, Wesleyans, Methodists, and the Brotherhood.⁴¹

Examples of nonconformist ministers joining and playing an active role within the branch included the Rev. Kenneth Keay, of St Andrew's Presbyterian church from 1919 to 1926. Keay demonstrated his support for the CLNU by serving on its committee and by giving talks to surrounding districts and villages.⁴² As a veteran of the trenches (he served in the Scottish Rifles), Keay spoke out against

³⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 29 June 1932, p.1. Calling for co-operation between the League and the Church, he announced that 'The League of Nations is the greatest attempt ever made to give a body to the spirit of peace.'

⁴⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 8 November 1920, p.4.

⁴¹ Cheltenham Public Library: CW/63G323.3CHE. CLNU Annual Report for 1932. See also *Gloucestershire Echo*, 31 March 1926.

⁴² Between 1920 and 1922 he spoke at various village meetings in addition to those of the main Cheltenham branch. *Gloucestershire Echo*, 24 November 1920, p.5 (Hatherley); *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 26 February 1921, p.2 (Combe Hill); *Gloucestershire Echo*, 2 March 1921, p.5 (Winchcombe); *Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 December 1921, p.6 (Shurdington). *Gloucestershire Echo*, 9 February 1922, p.4 (Swindon Village); *Gloucestershire Echo*, 7 November 1922, p.5 (Birdlip).

the horror and futility of war and lectured in a 'stirring and eloquent' manner on the work of the LON. He also gave a talk to the Rotary Club on the subject of 'fellowship' which resonated with the League's aims.

However, his congregation at St Andrew's demonstrated rather less support for the CLNU. As a community it put much effort into its 'sales of work' which raised money for foreign projects around the world. As well as supporting overseas missions, it raised funds in response to natural disasters worldwide. In this sense, it showed a clear understanding of its international obligations. A retrospective article on the church written in 1936 noted that during the post-war years in particular,

the congregation, though small, has been marked by its generous givings to outside objects...and in especial measure to the great foreign missions venture of the church in China and India.⁴³

Surprisingly, although the town's Free Church Council (of which St Andrew's was a member) declared support for the LON, the church itself did not become a corporate member of the CLNU and very few of the names of St Andrew's congregation link with CLNU membership or activities.⁴⁴ The issue was discussed by the Deacons' Court when a letter was received in November 1924 asking the church to become a corporate member. The committee's first response was to postpone any decision and when it came up again the following year it was given short shrift,

The question whether the church should become a corporate member of the LON was again brought forward but on a motion of Mr C. Smith (sessions clerk) and seconded by Mr Grant and carried unanimously, it was decided to pass on to the next business.⁴⁵

⁴³ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 17 October 1936, p.6.

⁴⁴ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 16 January 1932, p.2. An obituary for Mr C. H. Smith who was associated with St Andrew's for forty-six years mentions that he was a Liberal, an Echo journalist, abstainer and non-smoker, but makes no reference to any connection with the CLNU.

⁴⁵ Gloucestershire Archives: D7755 3/1/2. Deacons' Court Minutes for St Andrew's.

Likewise, in 1929, when its new minister (Rev. J. Purves) gave a Remembrance Day address, he only made a passing reference to the LON ('it exists and functions'), calling instead for his congregation to seek moral before military disarmament.⁴⁶ Although St Andrew's sent a representation to the 1932 Disarmament Conference and petitioned Sir Walter Preston (MP) to give it his support, and in 1935 became a member of the Society for the Promotion of International Peace amongst Nations through the church, it continued to remain aloof from the CLNU. A reminder, it would seem, not to inflate support for the Union. Despite the presence of a charismatic and active minister, St Andrew's was a nonconformist congregation that did not openly support the LNU, either locally or nationally. Little explanation is given for this other than the possibility that the League was too closely identified with communism in the eyes of some protestants.

A very active and stalwart supporter of the CLNU was the Rev. Barbara Thomas, minister at Bayshill Unitarian Church in Cheltenham from 1926 until her retirement in 1957. In 1924 she formed a League of Nations Study Circle in connection with the Bayshill Church. At a meeting in support of the League, Mr D. L. Lipson (committee member of the CLNU and future president) noted and welcomed her example in showing an active interest in the League and expressed the hope that other churches would follow that example.⁴⁷

Barbara Thomas's broader contribution to the CLNU has been discussed more fully elsewhere in this thesis. Whether as a minister at Bayshill, president of the Cheltenham branch of the Women's International League, as a socialist or peace campaigner, her commitment to peace was evident. Although she did not hold an office within the CLNU she acted as its delegate to a number of national and international conferences. In 1931 under her presidency the local Women's International League branch organised a house-to-house canvass in the borough on the issue of disarmament and the forthcoming conference at Geneva. The theme was continued the following

⁴⁶ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 16 November 1929, p.4.

⁴⁷ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 6 December 1924, p.2.

year with the WIL taking as its subject world disarmament and the Draft Convention document which was to be submitted to the Geneva Conference the following month.⁴⁸ Under the auspices of the CLNU, she organised a resolution to be passed by ‘a wide diversity of religious and secular interests’ in Cheltenham seeking to reduce armaments,

This meeting believes that the existence of armaments on the present scale among the nations of the world endangers the maintenance of peace, and appeals for a determined effort to secure further reduction by international agreement.⁴⁹

Her willingness to endorse the work of the League and Union was made clear on many occasions and typified that of many other nonconformists within the town.

c. Society of Friends

The alliance between the LNU and pacifists (i.e. those who were opposed to the use of force under any circumstances) was at times an uneasy and ill-fitting one. Extreme radical views could be seen to threaten the culture of moderation that was very much the core of the Union’s principles. As such the Union was keen to put some distance between itself and those who championed pacificism.

Likewise, the Society of Friends found it difficult to give its support to a cause not dedicated to total disarmament. The 1921 minutes of the Preparative Meetings for the Cheltenham Society of Friends record that a body of literature had been received from the local secretary of the League of Nations Union asking the Society to consider becoming a corporate member. The Society took some time to consider its response. It initially appointed a James Bailey to attend CLNU meetings and report back to the Society. However, in the following year it reported that, ‘in respect to this meeting becoming a member of the League of Nations, it is decided that it will not be done – but our members are

⁴⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 22 January 1932, p.3.

⁴⁹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 19 November 1932, p.6.

encouraged to join individually'. Unfortunately, the minutes do not give any reasoning or discussion for the decision.⁵⁰

Some evidence of a divide between the two organisations was given in 1924 when a resolution was signed on a proposed LON draft treaty of mutual assistance, citing that,

We willingly recognise the disinterested devotion and goodwill displayed by the authors of the document, but feel that the methods it envisages are too much in conflict with the unspoken testimony of our society in regard to war, for us to endorse or support it.⁵¹

Similar sentiments were expressed by the Society when it wrote to Cheltenham's MP, Sir James Agg-Gardner, in 1928 asking him to put pressure on the Government to sign the Arbitration Treaty and Optional Clause, and in 1934 when it sent copies to all clergy exhorting them to back the call for complete disarmament.⁵² In 1938, seemingly ignoring the League, the Society wrote again to the local MP (D. L. Lipson) – asking for the Government to use its influence to call all the Nations of Europe together (rather than the League) to establish disarmament and peace.⁵³

Although members of the Society of Friends played no part in the structure and organisation of the CLNU, there was some common ground where co-operation could be upheld and links forged. For example, the Society of Friends participated in the Peace Sundays organised throughout the 1920s by the CLNU.

⁵⁰ Gloucestershire Archives: D1340/C4/M2. Cheltenham Society of Friends Preparative Meeting minute book, 8 October 1922

⁵¹ Gloucestershire Archives: D1340/C4/M2. Cheltenham Society of Friends Preparative Meeting minute book. Copy of letter from national meeting held at Llandrindod Wells, dated 5 March 1924.

⁵² Gloucestershire Archives: D1340/C4/M2. Cheltenham Society of Friends Preparative Meeting minute book, 8 January 1928 and 9 September 1934.

⁵³ Gloucestershire Archives: D1340/C4/M2. Cheltenham Society of Friends Preparative Meeting minute book, 9 October 1938.

d. Jews

The small size of Cheltenham's Jewish community in the 1920s and 1930s makes it difficult to test the assertion that the LNU actively sought to recruit and promote Jewish members.⁵⁴ With only seven or eight families in the town, there was no longer a viable congregation to support the Synagogue which was virtually moth-balled until the outbreak of war in 1939.⁵⁵ However, there was within the town an individual who provided a strong link between the Jewish community and the LNU – namely Daniel Leopold Lipson. Lipson was a master at Cheltenham College where he had taken on the running of a boarding house for Jewish students. Although the venture did not prove a success for the College, he persevered by opening his own private boarding house in town named Corinth House. Lipson was an early supporter and member of the Cheltenham branch. In May 1920 he gave a vigorous address at an early meeting, proposing a resolution to demand of the Government why it and the Allies were not willing to interfere to stop the dispute between Poland and her neighbouring states.⁵⁶ Lipson was also a regular writer to the letter pages of the press in which he made clear his support for the League – despite criticism from those who argued that as a school master he should take a more neutral stance. Lipson also argued that the Church should play a leading role in this as,

all men of whatever race or colour, were made in the image of God, and in the practical recognition of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men, the League of Nations, in uniting all peoples in the bonds of peace and goodwill, was doing essentially religious work.⁵⁷

Having resigned from school-mastering, Lipson took up a position in local government serving on both the town and the county councils. In 1935 he became the borough's MP, standing as an

⁵⁴ McCarthy, *The British People*, p.92.

⁵⁵ Torode, B., (1989), p.52.

⁵⁶ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 15 May 1920, p.2.

⁵⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 8 February 1926, p.4.

‘independent conservative’ and a supporter of the National Government. Having served first as CLNU vice-chair, he became its chair in 1933, a position he held for a number of years. Lipson’s contribution albeit an individual one was significant for the branch. He was a regular preacher at venues around the town and used the pulpit to spread his support for internationalism every bit as much as the politician’s soapbox. His support for internationalism continued after the war when he became chair of the newly formed local branch of the United Nations Association.

Summary

The notion that religion was a mobilising power in connection to the League and that the LNU stood as testimony to ecumenical and inter-faith co-operation can only partly be supported by events in Cheltenham. The Churches identified themselves with the League’s message of peace and were initially keen to show their allegiance with prominent local churchmen such as the Rector, Canon Wilson, placing themselves at the forefront of the movement. When sub-branches were established in the areas surrounding the town, it was often the local vicar who called and chaired the meetings. However, although there were some notable exceptions, only a few local churchmen played an active role in the organisation of the movement or served on its committee. It was not uncommon to hear clergymen such as Rev. Edgar Neal, whilst chairing branch meetings, confess that ‘he did not know as much of the League as he ought to’.⁵⁸ In fact, a growing criticism in the 1920s was that the Church itself had done very little to promote the League within its own congregations. Speaking in 1924, Lipson noted that while it was true that many leaders in the religious world were earnest workers for the League and the cause of peace, it was also true that many appeared to regard it with indifference.

The fact that membership of the League of Nations Union was small as compared with the number of those definitely associated with the churches of the land, showed how great was

⁵⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 2 December 1926, p.5.

the need for recognition of the fact that religion and the League were intimately bound together.⁵⁹

The rhetoric of support could be very positive. At a meeting in 1926 chaired by the Bishop of Hereford, a resolution was moved by Rev. C. E. Stone (Salem Baptist Church), and seconded by Rev. Canon J. E. Quinn (St. Gregory's), that,

this meeting, representing all religious congregations in the Cheltenham area, pledges itself to the support of the League of Nations Union in the cause of peace, and its work for the welfare of humanity; and further urges the necessity for all congregations to enrol as corporate members of the Union.⁶⁰

However, the reality was somewhat different. The appeal produced only a modest and mixed response. By 1932, although nine of the town's churches had enrolled as corporate members only two were Anglican.⁶¹ Given that the cost of enrolling was a very modest one (£1 a year) we can only speculate what their reluctance was based on. Possibly, even where enthusiastic Leaguers were present to give a strong lead, congregations felt the LNU too divisive an issue for their members. Whatever the reasons were, the lack of support from these churches was clearly felt by the CLNU with Monro Briggs complaining that,

the apathy shown by the Churches towards the great cause of international peace was little short of disgrace.⁶²

⁵⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 3 December 1924, p.3.

⁶⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 October 1926, p.4.

⁶¹ Cheltenham Public Library: CW/63G323.3CHE. CLNU Annual Report for 1932. Corporate members listed were: The Parish Church, Christ Church, Salem, Highbury, Bethesda Wesleyan, Bayshill Unitarian, Royal Well United Methodist churches, and the Charlton Kings and Exmouth Street Brotherhoods.

⁶² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 31 March 1926, p.3.

Ironically, one of those churches showing a reluctance to support the League was Briggs' own church, All Saints, where he had served for many years as a sidesman. He repeated his complaint three years later,

my experience as an organiser in appealing for practical help from clergy and ministers during the last ten years has been most discouraging. Most of them reply that they really know little or nothing about the League of Nations, that it is a political matter.⁶³

Despite its relative success with nonconformists, the CLNU's attempts to capture support from a broad swathe of religious bodies and create a Christianised liberal internationalism alienated more than those to whom it appealed. The Established Church remained wary of offending the popular patriotic sentiments of their congregations by showing favour to the League's internationalism (or worse still, communism). Equally, pacifist groups such as the Quakers regarded the pragmatism of the League as a threat to its commitment to 'peace at any price'.

⁶³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 4 February 1929, p.4.

Chapter 8 The CLNU and Opposition

This chapter identifies opposition faced by the CLNU in the town and considers its implications for the branch. It concludes by identifying those factors that nurtured the branch for two decades and those that ultimately brought about its demise.

Given that only a minority of the town's adults became members of the CLNU, identifying sources of opposition should not be problematic – however, initially this is not the case. First, the Union's non-partisan make-up made it difficult for any politically organised opposition to assert itself in a head-on fashion. With Liberals, Conservatives and Labour all making up its membership any organised party-based 'anti-Union' opposition would have led to factions and divisions developing within party structures. When the town's parliamentary candidates were questioned about the League, they either fully endorsed it or, at least, expressed a cautious support for its aims, even if they were a little more reserved over its methods. This strong inclination to keep the Union out of party politics was argued by William Crispin in 1928 with a complaint to the editor of the *Echo*,

A handbill printed in blue came to me this morning. The heading is all right, but little else.

The deputation is Tory; the chairman is the same; and so are the others named. In short, it has the elements of a family party, and I am moved to ask why the party is not to be assembled at the Conservative Club. I am a supporter of the League of Nations Union, but I am not disposed to regard it as an appendage of any political party, or Church.¹

Monro Briggs (CLNU's honorary secretary) swiftly refuted the complaint, stressing that the branch had sent invitations out to, and received support from all shades of political and religious opinion.²

Over time though, opposition to the LNU did emerge, not least from Arthur Headlam - the outspoken Bishop of Gloucester. For him, membership of the Union was a matter of individual conscience

¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 24 November 1928, p.4.

² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 26 November 1928, p.5.

rather than any sort of political stance. He argued that wars could not be avoided as they were part of the nature of man and that disarmament would leave the country weak and vulnerable. Furthermore, the nation needed to maintain a strong navy and a strong Empire and that attempts by the League to reduce either of these were delusional.³ Such attacks often prompted a spirited response from members of the CLNU,

it is difficult, after reading the Bishop's pronouncement, to control one's indignation sufficiently to write a letter fit for publication. Unhappily, these views are what one expects from Dr Headlam. They would be mischievous enough in any public man, but in a Church leader they were deplorable past expression.⁴

A more general criticism of the LNU was articulated by Alfred Miles (a Conservative and Wesleyan). In a letter to the press in 1932 he expressed a clear dislike of war being made a topic of general church discussion,

One is astonished to go to some of our places of worship which were built, and during their existence have been "for the glory of God." But for some unearthly reason the Holy Trinity has to take its exit, and this disarmament and many other mad fads have taken its place. If any public man wishes to place his views before the public it is his place to take a public hall, and not to use any sacred edifice for his dramatic power.⁵

Generally though, opposition from the clergy towards the CLNU was more in the form of a passive resistance based on apathy and disinterest. Again, it was Monro Briggs who pointed out that,

³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 4 January 1932, p.1.

⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 6 January 1932, p.4. Correspondence from T. Flower Mills (press secretary of the Women's International League).

⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 February 1932, p.4.

my experience as an organiser in appealing for practical help from clergy and ministers during the last ten years has been most discouraging. Most of them reply that they really know little or nothing about the League of Nations, and that it is a political matter.⁶

Another reason that makes opposition to the CLNU less obvious to detect is that the fundamental principle of the League (the avoidance or prevention of war through other means) was a difficult one to stand against – especially in the aftermath of the War. When opposition made itself evident it was often from a specific interest group - such as anti-vivisectionists – who in most other respects supported the League’s aims. The result of this is that a universal, definable, and conspicuous opposition to the CLNU appeared to be absent from the record. In such cases historians can turn to methodologies associated with microhistory and the digitization of genealogical material to construct a ‘polyphonic history’ of small accounts.⁷ Used ethically and with care, small histories can be woven together to create a more coherent analysis and reveal any common factors which shed light on the bigger picture.

From its beginnings the LNU was fully aware that it would face opposition in its aim to win the support of the nation for the principles of the League. Not only was there a ‘newness’ about its message but it was also one which went counter to much of the patriotic jingoism that had pervaded Britain’s foreign policy in the nineteenth century. At an early meeting of the CLNU, the Reverend Dr Flecker (Headmaster of Dean Close School) outlined some of the problems the movement faced,

Two classes of people had been disappointed in the history of the League since its establishment. There were, first, the good old, crusted militarists, who were the embodiment of common-sense, who had no patience with idealism, and who still believed that the best

⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 4 February 1929, p.4.

⁷ Laite, J., ‘The Emmet’s Inch: Small History in a Digital Age,’ *Journal of Social History*, vol. 53 (2020), pp.963–989. See also, Laite, J., *The Disappearance of Lydia Harvey. A True Story of Sex, Crime and the Meaning of Justice* (London, 2022). Whilst reminding us of all its potential pitfalls, assumptions, tricks and devices, the author uses this method to bring clarity of focus to her history of prostitution and in particular the life of Lydia Harvey which prior to her work existed only in fragments.

way to preserve peace was to prepare for war. The other class of people were those who were disappointed, impatient, and saddened. They accepted far too readily the verdict of “failure” they began to wonder whether it was worthwhile continuing their subscriptions to the League of Nations Union.⁸

Flecker’s message to the Union was that it needed to educate the nation. However, for adults, all too often, this meant going up against the ‘grab and greed’ of aggrandising politicians and a sense of patriotism that was deeply part of the nation’s life. The main hope for the League he argued, was to instil a better outlook and higher ideals in the next generation. Over the next two decades, whilst the Union did enjoy some success in this aim in school and youth groups, similar attempts to educate and inform adults failed to convert or persuade a majority to its cause.

When opposition broke its silence publicly, it was often in the form of individuals expressing their own views. However, on closer examination it is possible to see how it could also reflect a more institutionalised opposition to the Union.

One of the most outspoken and consistent critics of the CLNU was John Henry Trye, a Conservative councillor and twice mayor of the borough.⁹ Trye was a member of an old Gloucestershire family which could trace its roots back to 1066 and whose seat was Leckhampton Court, just on the outskirts of the town. After attending Nuneaton grammar school, he served in the Royal Navy from which he retired in 1912. In the First World War he worked in the War Office and then went to Washington as a liaison officer to the United States Navy Department. He was awarded the CBE and received the Navy Cross from the President of the United States. Coming to Cheltenham in 1922, he was elected onto the town council, serving on various committees before becoming an alderman.

⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 February 1924, p.3.

⁹ Trye served as mayor from 1932 to 1933 and from 1937 to 1938.

Trye was well-established within the local Conservative Association and was a regular attendee of Primrose League meetings in the 1920s. However, unlike James Agg-Gardner, the town's Conservative MP, who lent his support to the CLNU and its activities, Trye remained its ardent critic. He gave his views in an open meeting set up between him and Daniel Lipson in 1924 debating the effectiveness of the League's ability to prevent war. Trye argued that,

the nation which places over-confidence in an international machinery of this sort may find itself 'let down' very badly and that the very machinery itself, particularly in such a weapon as the 'economic boycotts' may contain elements aggravating rather than diminishing the risks of war, so long at any rate as the United States remains out of the League.¹⁰

He opposed the CLNU on a number of occasions, challenging its activities in various areas. In 1922 he argued against a reduction from £10 to £5 in the rate charged to the CLNU for its use of the Town Hall. As a member of the Education Committee, he attempted to thwart the introduction of LNU literature in school lessons and the Council's sponsoring of the LON essay competition in the town's schools. In 1929 he tried to prevent any Council money being used to sponsor the showing of an LON film (*The World War and After*) to school children. Later, in 1936, he argued that the town's Art Gallery and Museum was not an appropriate place for lectures of the LON to be held. Finally, as a chair of the Highways Committee he denied permission for a peace banner to be put up over the Promenade. It could be argued that, individually, each of these was of modest significance and that he was outvoted by other committee members on every occasion. A consistent argument from Trye's was that the Union was a political body and as such should not be given privileges and exceptions that were denied other political groups. However, his concerns that the Union was introducing propaganda into schools did find support amongst others.

¹⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 7 October 1924, p.3. The paper does not record the outcome of the debate but remarks that a useful two hours of informed discussion occurred.

An explanation of his opposition to the Union, might be that Trye was simply a curmudgeonly individual, or at least, someone who wished to be as cautious as possible in spending Council funds. His reaction to the Council giving out money to school children as prizes for LON essays was that,

They could not even find money to give prizes to the children at the Central School for their general work, and yet they could find money to give prizes to an outside political organisation. The thing was absolutely and positively wrong.¹¹

Within the town Trye was a highly regarded and popular figure and was well supported from within and beyond his own party.¹² The clearest indication as to why he was against the LNU was shown in a speech he made in 1923 in which he talked of the great principles of the Primrose League, one of which was to,

maintain the integrity of the British Empire, [which] is of the greatest importance to the world. We must keep our great Empire intact in every way. It is an enormous force upon which the future of the world for good or evil rests. As long as the English-speaking peoples are united, they can and will control the world for good, and we ought to be proud to do our share in maintaining our Empire.¹³

For many Conservatives, the Empire was still what they put their trust in, and it provided a more stable and secure form of security than the coalition of allies offered by the LON. The Primrose League also adopted a clear anti-alien and anti-communist stance, and Russia's membership of the LON was an insurmountable stumbling block for many of its supporters.¹⁴

¹¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 May 1924, p.3.

¹² *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 12 November 1932, p.7. Reports that his proposals for mayor were well received.

¹³ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 22 September 1923, p.6.

¹⁴ Hendley, M., 'Anti-Alienism and the Primrose League: The Externalization of the Post-war Crisis in Great Britain 1918-32', *Albion*, vol.33 (2) (2001), pp.243-269.

There may well have also been another reason, nearer home, as to why Trye was against the CLNU. Rather than socialists or communists, Trye identified the Liberals as the main threat to Conservative fortunes within the town,

The objects of the Primrose League formed an agreeable contrast to the principles of their enemies. In Cheltenham they were not so troubled with Communists or Socialistic doctrines, their opponents being mainly composed of the Liberal Party.¹⁵

Rather than any ideological stance, Trye's opposition to the CLNU may have in part been a mistrust of a large Liberal contingent among its leadership. On some occasions he could exhibit a sympathy very much in line with League sentiments. He opposed a proposal to sell for scrap the World War One tank which had been on display at Montpellier gardens, arguing that it was,

a necessary reminder of the horrors of war we did not want to see again, although present-day circumstances made it not improbable. "We want every reminder that we can get."¹⁶

Trye's stance against the CLNU was influenced by his support for the Empire and his hostility towards Liberalism, and can also be explained at a pragmatic level. He sympathised with attempts to prevent war, but like many others he was not convinced that the League had the wherewithal to meet its aims. He regarded it as a clumsy, ineffective, and potentially dangerous body that could lead Britain into commitments she could not or would not want to face. That he was intelligent, popular, and politically aware makes a more general point that despite its barrage of literature and attempts to inform, the Union was far from successful in convincing the wider public of its ability to succeed. Trye's status within the town and the offices he held also gave a greater credibility to those who voiced their opposition to the CLNU, thereby adding to the branch's challenge of recruiting members.

¹⁵ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 6 March 1926, p.6.

¹⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 7 January 1936, p.5.

Another individual conspicuous in his criticism of the Union through the correspondence pages of the local press was Reginald Burton. Like Trye, Burton was from a military family. He served in the West Indian army in Jamaica and Barbados before transferring to the Indian Army, ending his career as commandant of the Cadet College at Wellington. As well as writing books on Napoleon's Russian campaign, he was both a big game hunter and pursued an interest in natural history. On retirement, like many other army officers, Burton moved to Cheltenham where he took up residence in Bafford Grange and a position on the Board of the local hospital. Burton was a Conservative and a member of the Primrose League.¹⁷ He wrote letters to the press on a number of topics, including his opposition to the Channel Tunnel on grounds of national defence.¹⁸

After attending an early CLNU public meeting, he criticized the LNU for its support for the Geneva Protocol of 1924. Burton argued that the Protocol, with its promise of League support against an aggressor, was both a threat to peace and the Empire, given that every dominion government had already rejected it.¹⁹ Although not outright in his disapproval of the League, he called the activities of the Union 'dangerous, if only in creating an atmosphere of illusion'.²⁰ Later he differentiated between the worthy work of the League and the disingenuous actions of the Union, arguing that calls for intervention against aggressors whilst demanding disarmament at the same time, were in danger of both breaking up the League and causing a prolongation of any war. He took issue with Monro Briggs for confusing the League with the Union over its stance on Japan and China, claiming,

We all support the League, but many of us condemn the unwise action of the LNU. Those who have taken sides in the present trouble in the Far East surely are not friends of peace. Let the LNU give the League of Nations a chance to settle matters which they have in hand.²¹

¹⁷ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 14 January 1928, p.6.

¹⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 2 January 1929, p.4.

¹⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 December 1927, p.4. See also, Birn, *The League of Nations Union*, pp.57-60. Discussion of Protocol.

²⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 December 1927, p.4.

²¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 1 March 1932, p.4.

Burton was a man of some intelligence and experience of the world. He was interested enough in the work of the League to attend local branch meetings. However, he remained very unconvinced as to the effectiveness of the LNU with its demands for disarmament on the one hand and intervention on the other. He was representative of many Tories who could support the general aims of the League in its pursuit of peace but remained critical of the LNU's attempts to put such aims into practice – particularly those which threatened the stability and integrity of the Empire.

A more specific opposition to the LNU was voiced at the time of the Peace Ballot. In 1934 Sir Bolton Eyre-Monsell, the MP for Evesham, wrote in a letter to General Sir Francis Davies, chair of the Evesham Divisional Conservative Association,

I can conceive of no worse service to the League of Nations than the canvassing of public opinion on questions which appear to be easy to answer but which in reality are bristling with highly technical difficulties, difficulties with which the general public cannot possibly be familiar.²²

Bolton, whilst describing himself as a hearty supporter of the League, was worried that the Union's actions would discredit both the National Government and the League itself. This was a concern shared by the Editor of the *Echo*,

Whatever may have been the motive which prompted the Peace Ballot, the form in which its questionnaire is framed is not likely to result in much practical good. It implies on the one hand that the National Government has failed in its duty to the League of Nations and on the other hand appears to suggest that if the British people will shout "Peace" loudly and persistently every foreign nation will mend its ways and follow our example.²³

²² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 16 November 1934, p.3 .

²³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 23 November 1934, p.4.

Further criticism of the LNU's Peace Ballot was given by A. S. Judge (one of the town's Anglo-Indians and a member of its prestigious New Club) who declared that it had left the country militarily weak,

One of the causes of the failure in recruiting can be traced to the "peace ballot" initiated and carried out by a group of zealots controlling the League of Nations Union. People were led to believe that if the country disarmed and full reliance was placed on the League of Nations peace would be ensured.²⁴

This view was more widely endorsed by the *Echo's* editorial,

It is easy to see now that the egregious peace ballot provided by the League of Nations Union and kindred associations, intended as a mandate for disarmament, was a piece of unadulterated folly in that it encouraged the Government to continue its flight after that will-o'-the-wisp called collective security, and inoculate the nation with the virus of pacifism to such an extent that at the moment few Britons can be found to serve their country.²⁵

Despite claiming it a success and a validation that the League's aims were supported by the nation, the Peace Ballot became a turning point in the Union's popularity. Undoubtedly, the Ballot did give the nation's citizens the chance to break their silence and debate foreign policy. However, it also provided a hard target for those who wished to oppose the Union and who could now cast it as impractical and unpatriotic.

A more predictable opposition to the Union came from local Fascists. In 1934 Oswald Mosely, accompanied by his mother, Lady Mosely, spoke at a meeting in Gloucester attended by Lieutenant Commander T. Godman (District Administrative Officer for Gloucestershire for the British Union of Fascists). That year Godman also took part in a public debate of the Town's Parliament in

²⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 May 1936, p.4.

²⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 24 November 1936, p.4.

Cheltenham.²⁶ Supporting the motion that Britain and her Dominions should immediately withdraw from the League of Nations, he spoke against Councillor Lipson. Godman argued that without Germany, Japan, and the USA the League could not be regarded as a real League of Nations and that it had failed to solve any of the post-war problems. When faced with difficulty its futility became obvious - although he conceded that it had done some good work with regard to the white slave trade and drug traffic. When the vote was taken, the motion was lost by a 'large majority'.²⁷ Whether this was an endorsement of the LNU or a rejection of fascism is debateable, and it is reasonable to assume that the CLNU would have planned for a large attendance of their members at the debate. Throughout the early 1930s regular correspondents appeared in the press that were hostile to the League and decried its efforts for peace. Many appeared under pseudonyms, such as this by 'Rooster',

The League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference must surely be the creations of Utopians. Man is a fighting animal, and nations will always arm to defend their interests. To what do we owe our Empire and commerce. Not to soft words, but to the point of the sword.²⁸

'Prudentia' (identified by some readers as female) was typical of many letters opposing the League's call for disarmament,

The Army, Navy, and Air Force are our insurance premium for peace...Perhaps at no time in the history of the world has war been so rife as to-day, but it is of a different nature. The nations of the world are each in their economic camps with spearheads of tariffs pointed at

²⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 21 September 1925, p.4. This body held regular weekly sessions, meeting at the YMCA from the end of the war. All were welcome to attend. Run along lines of Parliamentary procedures, its aim was to enable 'thinking persons to formulate a genuine political thesis ... and be more capable of using the vote in the right direction after studying politics through the medium of debate.' Topics included unemployment, foreign policy, finance, housing, education, health, and coal.

²⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 26 October 1934, p.3.

²⁸ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 27 October 1933, p.4.

each other. Again this is unfortunate, but unavoidable, nations must protect their nationals or starve.²⁹

‘Prudentia’ repeated the same message two years later,

As long as these potent elements exist there is no alternative but to be strong, so that our efforts for peace may be respected.... If spending £100,000,000 on our defences would ensure peace the insurance premium would be worth-while.³⁰

In 1935 A.C. Rolt (FRHS and nurseryman) launched a scathing criticism of the Union for calling for action against Italy whilst at the same time claiming that war was incompatible with Christianity,

Such sloppy contradictory sentimentalism...will, I am sure, convince every sensible man and woman that "The Union" is composed of leaders not capable of leading. I would strongly advise all your readers to leave all matters of high and delicate diplomacy in the hands of those capable Ministers elected by the majority of the nations and to the collective body of representative nations forming the League of Nations. To do otherwise would be to support a society embarrassing to his Majesty's Government, dangerous to the country and our Empire and the peace of Europe and tending to make us the laughing stock of the world.³¹

Whereas in the 1920s the local press had been mostly sympathetic to the League's cause, editorials appeared showing a clear sea-change of opinion, taking a more hostile and damaging stance against the LNU. When LNU members demanded heavier sanctions against Italy and proposed that Britain should parcel out its Empire to avert any further wars of aggression by nations that felt the increasing need for their own colonial expansion, the *Echo* made clear its views,

²⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 20 January 1932, p.4

³⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 9 July 1934, p.4.

³¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 20 August 1935, p.4.

One by one the dreams of the idealists who would seek a way to world peace by methods that would break up the British Empire are being shattered.... does anyone seriously suggest that administration by a League of Nations that cannot control the actions of its own members to-day would be an efficient substitute for British rule which is founded on a basis of liberty and justice for all and not on exploitation? ³²

Others in the town also expressed a growing sense of frustration with the LNU.

All that the League has shown for its sixteen years' existence is a palace, a Tower of Babel, which has cost £2,000,000; a very numerous and expensive secretariat speaking many languages; and countless tons of wastepaper. ³³

and,

Nobody has ever been able to prevent war since the world began, for war is Nature's pruning knife. Countries have become great, and held their supreme position, through sheer force (remember Rome!). If this country wishes to remain leader of modern civilisation the world must be made to feel her might. We are still Britons and proud of it, and we'll still fight for our country to the last drop of blood when necessary. ³⁴

Criticism also came from the political Left. As early as 1921 Cheltenham's Labour supporters argued that the League had not done enough to condemn Polish aggression against Russia. Later, in the 1930s, Rev. Barbara Thomas was outspoken in her criticism of the League's failure to impose oil sanctions on Italy and then again for its support for appeasement with Germany. Whereas Tory

³² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 February 1936, p.4.

³³ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 30 September 1936, p.4. Letter by Mr A. Judge, a regular and outspoken critic of the Union for a number of years.

³⁴ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 22 July 1936, p.4. More disconcerting for the CLNU the letter purported to be by 'ONE OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION'.

criticism of the League was often for its attempts to do too much, that from the Left was more to do with its seeming inaction.

On occasion the CLNU faced criticism from those who should have been amongst its staunchest supporters. The suffragist and pacifist, Theodora Flower Mills, was an outspoken supporter of the peace-keeping work of the League arguing against rearmament on the grounds that 'you cannot make peace by preparing for war.' In her children's book *Princess Lily*, the narrator concludes by 'hoping and praying that peace and goodwill may last their lifetime' - reflecting much of the spirit and work of the LNU and indeed her own commitment to pacifism.³⁵

However, her name does not appear on membership lists for the CLNU. The reason for this was her strong commitment to anti-vivisection. Many peace-loving humanitarian women, like her, could not fully support the LNU as it had identified itself with vivisection and 'spends its time making experiments on living animals.'³⁶ At a public meeting in 1925, the CLNU tried to address these criticisms with Doctor Pruen making the case that much of the work done in this respect had brought significant advancement in medicine and health. However, not all the audience was won over. When questions were called for, Miss Duncomb asked,

How does the League of Nations justify its expenditure on laboratory work which involves the principles of vivisection and other cruel practices? I know this is preventing some of the Cheltenham members of the Anti-Vivisection Society from joining, and more especially those who are against inoculation of any kind.

Although the meeting ended with a unanimous vote of support for the League's actions, it was only because Miss Duncomb and Mr. Hogg left before the vote was taken.³⁷ These anti-vivisectionists may not have been a major threat for the Union, but they remained a stubborn thorn in its side.

³⁵ Flower Mills, T., *Princess Lily-of-the-Valley* (Guildford, 1922), p.148.

³⁶ *The Woman's Leader*, 6 April 1923.

³⁷ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 25 November 1925, p.4.

Another example of the Union losing the interest of its supporters came in May 1938. The town's Free Church Council received an invitation to send delegates to the National Peace Congress in Bristol, they declined on the grounds that 'no member present could undertake to attend'.³⁸

Two decades of increasing opposition took its toll on the CLNU and from 1935 membership declined and its influence in the town diminished,

It is but a few years since the League of Nations was virtually the controlling body of European affairs. Today it occupies a place in the background.³⁹

Part of the reason for this locally was that more pressing concerns about the nation's defence were being raised. In 1936 the town's Science Society hosted a lecture entitled 'Gas attacks from the air' which stressed the need to set up local bodies to organise training in the use of respirators and protective clothing.⁴⁰ As the actions of Japan, Italy, and Germany put the League's aims to the test, the more it was forced into having to declare what its methods in opposing them would be. In doing so, the rhetoric of the League moved away from vague idealistic principles into specific actions for which it would be accountable, and which gave its opponents a clear target to attack.

The branch tried to put a brave face on things claiming in its 1938 annual report that,

so many of our members have not lost faith in the ultimate success of the League principles and are determined to assist in the rebuilding of the League. As evidence that the 'long view' is taken by our members, it is pleasing to note that our subscription income for 1938 was greater than that for the previous year.⁴¹

In reality, though, its support was ebbing away. The LNU role has been called paradoxical. As Thompson argues, whilst it demonstrated its importance in extending the mystique of the League

³⁸ Gloucestershire Archives, D8011 1/1/. Minutes of Cheltenham Free Church Council 1933 onwards.

³⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 6 May 1939, p.4. Reported in *Today's Gossip* column.

⁴⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 20 Feb 1936, p.5.

⁴¹ Gloucestershire Archives: PQ6.4GS. CLNU annual report 1938.

idea in the 1920s, not only did it fail to win the confidence of Labour and the allegiance of many Conservatives but:

The character of the Union's campaign may have encouraged (unintentionally of course) a dangerous tendency to emphasise the moral influence of the League at the expense of practical measures which might have made the organisation an effective means for collective security.⁴²

The aspirational fervour for the LNU, felt strongly in the early 1920s when many of its local branches were set up, in the face of growing criticism, drained away in the 1930s as the League was made to look increasingly irrelevant and powerless.⁴³

⁴² Thompson, J.A., 'The League of Nations Union and Promotion of the League Idea in Great Britain', *Australian Journal of Philosophy and History*, 18 (1972), pp.52-61.

⁴³ Graves, R. and Hodge, A., *The Long Weekend* (Cardinal: Aylesbury reprinted in 1991), p.268. The authors recall an incident when, in 1933, the following words were chalked onto the pavement besides Boadicea's statue, 'Gladstone, Palmerston and Pitt guided the destinies of the British Empire from Westminster – not from Geneva'.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

Whilst the primary focus of this thesis has been an investigation into the workings of a single LNU branch, it also resonates with a broader argument around the nature of British democracy initiated by the ‘new political history’ in the 1980s and 1990s.¹ There is a general consensus that the widening of the franchise and the rapid development of new forms of mass media provided the nation with more opportunities and a greater means to engage with politics.² However, there is less consensus as to what extent this actually happened. Ross McKibbin broadly argues that British democracy between the wars remained rooted in social hierarchy, cultural privilege and with a continuance of semi-feudal civil and political institutions which depoliticised civil life,

Large numbers of people freely abdicated any active political role or judgement in favour of elites who were still largely Edwardian. The country’s principal political institutions were entirely unreformed...the hope that many expressed at the end of the First World War that a democratic society based upon democratic institutions would evolve in England was not fulfilled.³

Opposing this are those historians who argue that McKibbin takes too narrow a view of democracy and that there is much evidence of political engagement and activism in the interwar years,

Indeed, when one probes deeper into the social and cultural history of the period, one finds a democratising impulse everywhere.⁴

It is found not just within the political parties but more so amongst non-governmental organisations, pressure groups and charities,⁵

¹ McCarthy, H., ‘Whose Democracy? Histories of British Political Culture Between the Wars’, *The Historical Journal* Vol. 55, No. 1 (2012), pp.221-238. This article summarizes the main historiography of the debate.

² LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy*, and Colpus, ‘The Week’s Good Cause.’

³ McKibbin, *Parties and People*, p.196.

⁴ McCarthy, H., (2012), p.234.

⁵ For example, McCarthy, H., ‘Parties, Voluntary Associations, and Democratic Politics in Interwar Britain’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (2007). Colpus E., ‘The Week’s Good Cause: Mass Culture and Cultures of

The presence of mass pressure groups like the LNU, as well as less overtly political voluntary organisations which flourished between the wars, suggest that civil society was very obviously undergoing a process of democratization following the introduction of universal suffrage.⁶

In addition, these groups attracted large numbers from the new female electorate, and through them, women could reflect on their collective political power and notions of active citizenship.⁷

Although the sides of the debate have been formed, there is still much work to be done if we are to understand the nature of interwar democracy – many of whose aspects, especially those of its grassroots, are still underrepresented in the research. The strength of this case study is that it brings us closer to what ordinary citizens and voters knew or cared about in terms of foreign policy and how they gave voice to their views. It also gives an understanding as to the difficulties they faced in doing so – both individually and collectively – and how an organisation needed to manage itself to be effective. In this respect (and indeed supporting McKibbin's view), one of the greatest challenges the Union faced was that of apathy and disinterest provoked by a disconnect between the top and bottom of the movement.

Despite having a membership that was initially strong in its support for peace, the Union gave little opportunity for ordinary members to help achieve this aim. A reading of LNU Executive Committee minutes for the two decades shows, on the one hand, a leadership group keen to increase membership and subscriptions, but on the other hand, demonstrates structures that were top-heavy and not designed to give the least say to grassroots members and local activists. Most resolutions submitted to the Union by various branches were given a cursory thanks or passed down the line to other

Philanthropy at the Inter-war BBC', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (2011). Beers, L., *Your Britain; Media and the Making of the Labour Party* (Cambridge MA, 2010). Lawrence, J., 'The Transformation of British Public Politics after the First World War', *Past & Present*, No. 190 (February, 2006).

⁶ McCarthy, H., 'Whose Democracy? Histories of British Political Culture Between the Wars', *The Historical Journal* Vol. 55, No. 1 (2012), p.229.

⁷ Beaumont, C., *Housewives and Citizens. Domesticity and the Women's Movement in England 1928-64* (Manchester, 2015). Also, *The Aftermath of Suffrage*, ed. by Gottlieb, J. and Toye, R. (Basingstoke, 2013)

Committees – only those that went against Union policies were shown further interest. As an instance, when the Liverpool and Merseyside Council complained about the lack of definite progress made by the LON Assembly, particularly in regard to disarmament, the Union's response was to remind them that their resolution should not be acted upon and that they were urged instead to 'concentrate on the main basic principles of the League and do their utmost to increase Union membership'.⁸ Equally though, when branch members did give their views it was often to complain that they were not heard enough, that they could not access meetings easily or that travelling expenses were too low.⁹

LNU leaders were aware of this problem, as expressed in a 1930 confidential report by its Reorganization Committee,

The feelings of Branches towards the Executive vary greatly in different places. In some, however, there seems to be a feeling that in its relation to Branches, Headquarters is too aloof. It does not do all it could in the way of stimulus and friendly counsel and makes itself felt rather too preponderantly by pressing for money and sending somewhat complicated directions for action.¹⁰

The Union's answer was to create a Branches Committee which would meet once a month to deal specifically with questions affecting relations between the branches and HQ.¹¹

In 1930 the LNU faced a challenge from a group known as the 'Gordonites' – a movement led by Lieut. General Sir Alexander Gordon demanding organisational changes in the Union to make it less cumbersome and more representative of its members.¹² Its response was to trim down the General

⁸ LSE: LNU/2. LNU Executive Committee minutes, 16 October 1930. Item 244.

⁹ LSE: LNU/2. LNU Executive Committee minutes, 1930. Letter from London Branch. 'As about 90% of the branches of the Union are not directly represented at the General Council Meetings, the Executive Council is asked to find some method at which more can be present'. It mentioned on-going concerns about cost of travelling and claiming expenses.

¹⁰ LSE: LNU/2. LNU Executive Committee minutes, January 1930.

¹¹ The Branches Committee was one of nearly thirty committees, sub-committees and Advisory Councils that reported to the Executive Committee.

¹² Birn, *The League of Nations Union*, pp.77-8.

Council, to create more regional Councils and to make the reception of visitors to HQ more welcoming. However, such changes did not lead to any massive overhaul of the LNU and relationship problems with the branches remained.

Such antagonisms were expressed in a letter to the Branches Committee in 1934, by a Mr Hellswell of the Stockport branch referring to a recent resolution of the General Council which prevented branches affiliating with other anti-war groups. Hellswell informed them his branch had passed an amendment against the Union's resolution as an,

attempt to stave the centralization of things which is bitterly resented by many branches, and which was causing needless friction...To curtail local autonomy is not advisable in a voluntary organisation and can only result in making Branches ignore the Headquarters' requests, with consequent lack of cohesion.¹³

Other attempts by the Union's leadership to address this lack of engagement with branch members included looking for new ways to present a more engaging and dynamic message, such as films and posters,¹⁴ but for the most, members were offered a diet of literature and speeches.

There are obvious difficulties when it comes to linking a local picture with a national one and any conclusions drawn have to bear this in mind. As a branch, Cheltenham, unlike those mentioned above, was largely very biddable to Union requests. It certainly won itself the favour of HQ in hosting the 1932 General Council. Its only act of 'defiance' was to reject three out of four resolutions passed by the LNU Council in 1938 calling for the government and the King to take action in Spain. Such was the branch's fear of giving offence that rather than reporting any dissent in the local press,

¹³ LSE: LNU/6. LNU Branches Committee minutes, 1 May 1934.

¹⁴ In June 1932, the Union took up an offer by Gervase Huxley and groups of French artists who gave their services free to produce designs for a new set of publicity posters.

it recorded positively that it had supported a fourth and more general proposal ‘to put an end to the practice of starving the constructive non-political activities of the League and its work’.¹⁵

Whilst the CLNU rarely voiced any open dissatisfaction or dissent with the Union, the branch did reflect a movement largely devoid of those pieces of ‘social glue’ and rituals that bring coherence and momentum to a political campaign – marches, trips, drama, entertainment, music, uniforms etc. Under the heading ‘Help for the LNU’ a letter from Mr A. Poulton, a CLNU supporter, suggested how it might increase membership in the town,

Reading the League of Nations Union report, I noticed a very large fete was held at Birmingham last May; dramatic performances, side-shows, fashion parades, dancing, etc. The fete was skilfully advertised, and the result was a success. This should be of great interest to Cheltenham, in fact, I should like to see some winter amusements started, such as concerts, etc. It would not only gain ground in membership but would raise money, and interest many in the great principles of the League. It seems to me it wants some person in some high rank to start the ball rolling. Every spoke to-day put to the wheel will carry us one step nearer towards the goal.¹⁶

The best the CLNU managed were three peace pageants in the late 1920s and some community singing at its meetings. Ironically, for a peoples’ movement, the LNU offered very little opportunity or scope for popular participation. Once war became inevitable the CLNU like many branches struggled to find relevance, often sinking into the navel-gazing exercise of debates and brains trusts. At the same time, many members decided that there were more active ways they could serve their nation – either by opposing the war or by supporting it.¹⁷

¹⁵ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 16 April 1938, p.6.

¹⁶ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 20 October 1925, p.4. Poulton was an industrial engineer employed at Cheltenham Ladies College and a member of the Liberal Association.

¹⁷ The 1939 Register records several members signed up as Air Raid Wardens, Special Constables, or Auxiliary Nurses. Others became active in the ‘stop war movement.’

By contrast, studies of the Primrose League, although at its most influential a few decades earlier, show how it became, ‘the most socially inclusive organisation the world had so far seen... a gigantic political Noah’s Ark, with every group in British society present’. This was achieved by: a flexibility that kept it responsive to local issues; a subscription formula that favoured the poor over the rich; the provision of all kinds of entertainment for its members; keeping to a simple message; and targeting the recruitment of women (Primrose Dames), children and workers – all of which helped create a deep sense of Tory community.¹⁸

A flavour of this is reflected in the annual meeting of the Cheltenham Habitation in 1928. Sir James Agg-Gardner MP opening the meeting reported a successful year. Membership was up generally, but in particular, recruitment to the Young Buds (junior section) had increased from 1316 to 1610. The group was congratulated for winning a number of competitions, honours were presented, and music and dances performed. In addressing the meeting Mrs George Mitchell, provincial representative, conspicuously praised the contribution of women and the young. Her address also highlighted what the government had done for the poor in terms of orphans and widows and in cutting income tax.¹⁹

Alongside its primary task of fighting elections on behalf of the Conservatives, the local Habitation’s activities generally in the interwar period present a lively list of dances and galas, summer fetes (often hosted in the homes of local gentry), summer excursions by coach or rail (including Barry Island and Cheddar Gorge), teas and *conversazione* in local cafes, whist drives and sports. A few of these activities were offered by the CLNU, but there was never enough to provide members with a clear sense of belonging to a united community or a foundation network for its political identity.

However, it would be wrong to see branch activities in a wholly negative light. For two decades the CLNU provided a non-partisan, cross-party and cross-religious forum for a wider public debate on

¹⁸ Cooke, A., *A Gift from the Churchills. The Primrose League 1882-2004* (London, The Carlton Club, 2010), and *The Conservative Party since 1900*, ed. by Antony Seldon and Stuart Ball (OUP, 1994), pp.617-619.

¹⁹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 26 May 1928, p.13.

British foreign policy and international co-operation. It enabled voices outside of Westminster to be heard and to challenge those inside Parliament. One (but universal) such expression was voiced in the committee minutes of the Mere LNU branch:

‘It seems little that we can do in Mere when faced with world problems, but we can try to understand them and to apply to them the touchstone of Justice, co-operation, and some at any rate would add – love, and to create in our own town a centre of whole-hearted effort, educational, religious and political, embracing all sections and parties, towards the abolition of war and the enthronement of Peace, throbbing with progressive International life’.... The Committee does provide a very valuable forum for the discussion of current international affairs in a friendly atmosphere which helps its members to clear their own minds and appreciate the magnitude of present-day problems.²⁰

Despite such sentiments the war years witnessed the demise of the Union and its branches. As discussed in Chapter 2, the CLNU, whilst just about holding together as a branch, found little purpose in commenting on foreign policy whilst the nation waged war. Many of its old guard had died out and the next generation were looking to a more focussed and effective means of steering internationalism. The CLNU had enough remaining energy to transform itself into a new branch of the United Nations but in doing so, there was little attempt to look backwards or claim any sort of legacy for the CLNU. The war clearly marked an end of local interest in the League and Union and new ideas were sought.²¹

The CLNU had a significance in at least three particular areas of Cheltenham’s political life. First was the active participation of many women in its work either as committee members, propagandists, and educators for the League or in carrying out such practical task as ward collectors. Second was

²⁰ Wiltshire Archives: 2776/38. LNU Mere Branch Committee minute book 1933 onwards. Annual report 1938.

²¹ It is indicative that despite the assiduous work of two of its secretaries (Monro Briggs and Dye) no branch archive survived.

the work done to promote the League in the town's schools and youth groups. Ironically, in the short term, these separate youth sections with members too young to move up did little to swell the ranks of the senior branch. However, over time, the knowledge, information, and discussion promoted by the Union, often delivered by sympathetic teachers, was perhaps what did most to engage Britain's 'quiet citizens' and produce a post-1945 generation that was more articulate and more determined to recognise foreign affairs as their 'own intimate concern'. Maybe the London correspondent writing for the *Echo* in 1938 witnessed this when he observed that leaflets on China produced by the International Peace Campaign Movement were handed to the public as they walked on the streets, stood at bus-stops, and in cinema queues, or were put through the open windows of taxi-cabs that were waiting for hire.

I spent quite a time watching this leaflet activity, and what impressed me was the fact that the casual recipients of them, people in various walks of life, did not glance at them and throw them away. They read them with care.²²

A third success of the CLNU was how it brought together the talents of individuals of differing political and religious persuasions. Although helped by the town's recent tradition for political compromise, many individuals found a consensus within the branch – be they the likes of Joshua Monro Briggs, an Anglican Tory, Clara Winterbotham the town's Liberal Mayor, Barbara Thomas, its Labour-supporting Unitarian minister or Daniel Lipson, its Jewish 'independent' MP.

Despite these successes, which allowed the branch to sustain itself for two decades and then survive the war years to form the nucleus of a new United Nations group, it also displayed limitations. Some are understandable given the newness of an organisation such as the LNU – there was no established blueprint for a successful NGO to follow. As Napper has observed, in the interwar period, 'it is easy

²² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 4 February 1938, p.4.

to forget ... quite how much of the fabric of British life was unfamiliar, in doubt, or (at the very least) in the process of establishing itself.’²³

However, some of its limitations could have been better addressed. Those who supported the CLNU were those who were always going to support it – articulate, middle-class thinkers with a bent for political or intellectual discussion and looking for ways to shape their world. As an organisation the branch rarely won over any new converts beyond this social group. Most notably very few members came from the poorest sections of the town, whose priorities and needs lay elsewhere.²⁴ Nor did the branch manage to gain from its members a level of loyalty and commitment that superseded or sublimated their other loyalties. The LNU was not alone in this failing,

If a more active citizenry was to come into being, it required some form of stimulus or combination of forces that had not yet been evident in the interwar period...With the outbreak of hostilities in September 1939 it remained to be seen if...the test of total war, would have the galvanising effect on citizen culture that had hitherto been missing.²⁵

This case study acts as a counterbalance to recent revisionist work which argues that the LNU informed and empowered the nation to have a broader and more informed public debate of its foreign policy. When the uncharted *terra incognita* of a local branch is examined it suggests this view appears to be overstated and over optimistic. As Graves and Hodge wryly noted, by 1938,

At no time in English History had so much information on foreign affairs been available in lively popular form, nor so many conflicting views on policy and prospect. The result was less enlightenment than a permanent state of pending crisis, an expectancy of worse things to come, which grew blacker and blacker until the monstrous climax in September 1938.²⁶

²³ Napper, L., *British Cinema and Middlebrow Culture in the Interwar Years* (Exeter, 2009), p.7.

²⁴ CLNU Membership Survey. Includes details of members addresses.

²⁵ Jefferys, K., *Politics and the People: a History of British Democracy since 1918* (London, 2007), p.55-51.

²⁶ Graves and Hodge, (1991), p.341.

Albeit just one case study from a possible three hundred or so local branches, it demonstrates that the impact of League propaganda, through the efforts of the Union, was limited and lacking in permanence.²⁷

Whilst there were many in the local community who were willing, interested and enthusiastic to engage with and to inform themselves of the nation's foreign policy, they increasingly lost faith in the Union.²⁸ Despite the rhetoric and high ideas of its national leaders, there remained within the Union a clear disconnect between top and bottom. Minutes of the LNU executive committee show a leadership of the Union largely inclined to ignore their local branches or only give attention to reprimand them when they appeared to step out of line. Little was offered back to Union members who were constantly reminded of the need to pay their subscriptions and expected to consume vast amount of worthy but largely indigestible literature. The lack of any social glue or nurturing of its grass roots created a want of any clear corporate identity or single sense of purpose for supporters of the Union and ultimately led to its failure to recruit and maintain its membership. The LNU, through its branches, attempted to promote a popular discussion of, and an active engagement with, the direction of the nation's foreign policy, but as this case study suggests, at its grassroots it is difficult to regard it as a truly democratised or popularist movement.

²⁷ Law, M. J., *1938: Modern Britain. Social Change and Visions of the Future* (Bloomsbury, 2018). Using several case studies the author presents an alternative view of the 1930s as a decade of change, progress, and modernity. However, there is little evidence that this permeated into the nation's foreign policy.

²⁸ LSE Digital Library: LNU 12/20 LNU Executive Committee minutes 1943-45. Records Cheltenham Branch membership of paid-up members falling from 498 in 1938 to 296 by 1942.

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Appendix
Membership survey based on 1935 list

Key:

BWTAU	British Women's Total Abstinence Union
CC	County Councillor
CoE	Church of England
Con	Conservative
ER	Electoral Roll
Highbury	Highbury Congregational Church
Lab	Labour
Lib	Liberal
PCC	Parochial Church Council
Presbyt	Presbyterian
Subs	Subscription to LNU
UDD	Unpaid domestic duties (as recorded in the 1939 Register)
WFL	Women's Freedom League
WI	Women's Institute
1921	1921 Census
1939	1939 Register

Membership survey based on 1935 list

Other notes	Church	Party	Servants	Address	Occupation	Age	Source	Subs	Status	Forenames	Surname
				Montpellier Grove	Boarding House Proprietress	54	ER	1s.	Miss	'A M' - Elizabeth Mary?	Absolam
1929 - spoke at British Women's Total Abstinence Union meeting (linked to LNU and Peace)				Hewlett Rd.	Mother was widow (of Civil Servant in Customs and Excise)	26	1921	3s.6d	Miss	Betty Evelyn	Adams
				Sunridge, Charlton Kings	UDD	54	1939	2s.6d	Mrs	Miriam	Ainscow
			2	Sunridge, Charlton Kings	Medical Practitioner	52	1939	2s.6d	Dr	Herbert (with Miriam)	Ainscow
Portland Tabernacle connection; past pupil Ladies College, teacher; beekeepers; Czech relief fund 1938; living next to Yeo	Tabernacle			Hazel, Blacksmiths Lane, Prestbury	school mistress retired	68	1939	1s.	Miss	Ellen	Alcock
			3	South Lawn St Marks	Clerk in Ministry of Food	30	1939	1s.	Mr	R (Ronald)	Alcock
			1	London Rd, Charlton Kings	School Teacher	42	1939	1s.	Miss	FW (Frances Winifred)	Aldrick
Chair Prestbury parish council 1930s, district councillor, later in 1940s elected to County Council as an Independent; hospital board member	CofE St Mary Prestbury			Glebe Road, Prestbury	dairyman and coal merchant, married	65	1939	1s.	Mr	William Thomas	Aldridge
				Old Bath Road	Professional Nurse - retired - widow	51	1939	1s.	Nurse	Beatrice	Allard
				Eldon Road	Widow	66	1939	2s.6d	Mrs	Lillie	Amery
				Eldon Road	Builder's cashier's Clerk	32	1939	1s.	Miss	Winifred	Amery
ex-Ladies College (3 sisters)				Vittoria Walk	Ladies College Teacher - retired	75	1921	£1	Miss	Ellen Louisa	Andrews
ex-Ladies College (3 sisters)				Vittoria Walk	Ladies College Teacher - retired	79	1921	2s.6d	Miss	Alice	Andrews

Andrews	EE (Constance Emily)	Miss	3s.6d	1921	81	Ladies College Teacher - retired	Vittoria Walk				ex-Ladies College (3 sisters)
Ansell	Walter	Mr	5s.	1939	61	Journalist Editor	Gloucester Road				LONU committee 1926
Archer	S - Mrs Sidney (Jane Kate)	Mrs	1s.	1939	61	UDD, widow [of market gardener]	Swindon Road			CofE St Peter	St Peter's church member
Arkell	James P.	Mr	1s.	1939	63	tax inspector retired	Battledown				LONU committee, minutes secretary 1939; Ward Collector 1935
Arkell	J B ?John	Mr	£1.1s.	1921	87	retired farmer	Jersey Lodge, Hewlett Road (living with housekeeper Miss Rebecca Wheeler)			CofE	Church of England - previously churchwarden at Badgeworth, d1936
Auden	Ellen	Mrs	5s.	1921	67	UDD	Battledown				Wife of Bertram
Auden	Bertram	Mr	5s.	1921	64	Headmaster of Preparatory School (Glyngarth)	Battledown				LONU hon treasurer, teacher
Ayris	Walter	Mr	10s.6d	1911	64	Costumier (widower)	Montpelier Drive	1			
Baghot de la Bere	Rev. J. (John)	Rev	2s.	1939	65	vicar of Prestbury	The Vicarage Prestbury			CofE St Mary Prestbury	
Baily	C W (Cyril)	Mr	1s.	1921	32	credit clerk manufacturi ng chemists	Charlton Kings				
Baker	S W (Sophia Wallace)	Miss	1s.	1921	75	private means	Monsom Terrace				Women's International League member
Balg, Miss	Gerta	Miss	3s.6d	1921	48	assistant mistress Ladies College	Pilford Road				Estonia/Russia born
Ballinger	[George Alexander]	Mr	1s.	1939	36	Lieut in Indian Army	Millbrook Street			Methodist	Son of George and Eleanor; veteran of WWI, died in WWII
Ballinger	[E A] Eleanora Annie	Miss	3s.	1939	41	school teacher	Newent and Cheltenham			Methodist	Newent Grammar school in late 1920s, then Pates Grammar School; Free Church Council; daughter of George Ballinger; spoke on work of LONU at Winchcombe in 1923
Ballinger	(Eleanor Ann)	Mrs	1s.	news	76	home duties	Alstone Spa		Con	Methodist St Mark	Conservative; wife of George

Ballinger	Mr G (George)	Mr	1s.	news	72	railway signalman in 1921	Alstone Spa		Con	Methodist St Mark	Represents LONU at Kings funeral 1936; St Mark's Methodists; Alstone Spa proprietor; Esperanto; Dickens Fellowship; historical pageants; one daughter teaching at Pates GS, one a Mrs Mann
Ballinger Mr L H	Laurence Humphris	Mr	1s.	1939	47	master cabinet maker, married	Brandon Place				Supporter of large petition calling for reduction of arms 1932; Men's Co-op Guild member
Banks, Miss	Emily Jessie	Miss	2s.	1939	71	private means (teacher 1911)	The Orchids, Prestbury Road	1		CofE St Mary Prestbury	Public Assistance Institution (Poor Law) work esp. children's xmas parties at The Elms (institution); executive committee of Charity Organisation Society
Bardsley, Miss	Mary Elizabeth	Miss	1s.	1939	65	retired elementary school mistress	Old Bath Road				
Barker, Mr W D	William Dewson	Mr	1s.	1939	46	headmaster	Queens Road				teacher
Barlow Mr A H	Albert Henry	Mr	2s.6d	1939	53	general labourer for Cheltenham Corporation (1921) later Permanent Way Foreman (1939)	Albert Street				
Barlow Mrs G V	Gladys V	Mrs	10s.	1939	53	UDD, married to a retired banker	Christ Church Road				
Barnard	(Margaret)	Miss	5s.	1939	29	organiser of physical training	Leckhampton Road				
Barnett	H O	CC	1s.	1939	48	fishmonger shopkeeper	Painswick Road		Con		Dickens Fellowship president (discussed 1932 whether Dickens would have joined the LON); presiding over 'peace meeting' 1935;

											Conservative; governor of Pates Girls School; borough councillor
Barnett	L (Lily J)	Miss	1s.	1939	42	UDD living with brother	Tewkesbury Road				
Barnett	Rosa Sarah	Mrs	1s.	1939	75	UDD	Leckhampton Road	1		CofE	
Barnett	Charles S	Mr	1s.	1939	77	Fishmonger and Poulterer (owner of business in The Strand)	Leckhampton Road	1		CofE	County cricketer. Member of Union Club
Barnett, Miss M		Miss	1s.	x							
Barnfield	Emma	Mrs	1s.	1939	63	UDD (wife of a stonemason, retired)	Homestead, Sevenhampton			CofE	WI
Barnfield	Ada	Miss	1s.	1939	30	UDD	Upper Hill farm, Prestbury			CofE	WI (staying with married sister in 1939)
Barnfield	Florence [sister of Ada, daughter of Emma]	Miss	1s.	1939	34	elementary school teacher	Homestead, Sevenhampton			CofE	Sevenhampton Brockhampton and Charlton Abbots WI treasurer; church organist
Barratt, Mr JH	John Harold	Mr	£1.1s.	1939	73	private means, married	Fernbank, Pittville Circus Road	2			regular donations to charities
Barratt, Mr JR [Barrett]	Joseph Robert	Mr	1s.	1921	56	telephonist GPO (1921), retired in 39, married	Ryeworth Road, Charlton Kings			Noncon	Charlton Kings Brotherhood president 1930s and Free Church Council. LNU Ward Collector 1935
Barsham (Barcham), Mr CH	Charles Henry	Mr	1s.	1939	74	retired ironmonger	Moorend Park Road				
Bartlett, Miss	?Clara	Miss	1s.	1939	62	florist	70 The Promenade		Con		obit 1944 , funeral at All Saints church; ?Conservative
Batstone	(Ernest)	Mr	1s.	1939	65	retired pastrycook and confectioner	Great Norwood Street				
Baxter, Mrs	Julia Priscilla	Mrs	5s.	1939	70	UDD, wife of Raymond, foreman carpenter retired	Oscarville, Haywards Road			CofE Holy Apostles	d1940. Ward Collector 1935
Bayliss, Mrs	Elizabeth	Mrs	1s.	1911	85	wife of Francis, riding master, retired	St Luke's Place			CofE	d1935
Baylor, Mrs	Florence Jemima	Mrs	1s.	1939	59	Nursing Matron, retired (widow, living alone)	Oak Villa, Station Road, Churchdown				Primrose League connection in Churchdown; Queen

											Alexander nurse in WWI
Beard Miss K Louise	Kate Louise	Miss	1s.	1939	44	Building Society clerk	Lansdown Parade			Highbury	Highbury Church - family closely associated ; PO assistant (1911) Ledger clerk (1921)
Beasley, Mr E	Edgar	Mr	1s.	x	45	Topographical journalist, married	14 Mead Road, Leckhampton			CofE	d1949, obit: lectured at Art Gallery on cathedrals and churches; Dickens Fellowship Hon. Sec; editorial staff of Ed J Burrow and Co.
Beck, Rev WE	William Ernest	Rev	3s.6d	1921	50	Principal of St Paul's Training College, MA, married	Training College			CofE	LONU vice-president; teacher, made canon of Gloucester Cathedral in 1942
Beckingsale	C (Carrie)	Miss	2s.6d	1921	56	home duties	Old Bath Road	1			
Beckingsale, Mr D	Douglas	Mr	1s.	1939	25	publisher's manager	Bransleigh, Andover Road			Baptist Salem	Salem Baptist Church secretary
Bee, Miss A	Ann A Elizabeth	Miss		1921	42	Assistant Mistress All Saints Girls	Vittoria Place			CofE All Saints	All Saints Church (family connection)
Bel[l]ierby	William	Rev	10s.6d	1939	45	Vicar of St Paul's	Evesham Road			CofE St Paul	
Bel[l]ierby	Cicely	Mrs	10s.6d	1939	48	UDD	Evesham Road			CofE St Paul	Wife of William
Bell, Mrs and Miss	Elsie M	Miss	1s.	1939	42	UDD	157 Painswick Road			Methodist Bethesda	Bethesda Methodist connection and missionary society
Bell, Mrs and Miss	Elizabeth	Mrs	1s.	1939	78	private means	157 Painswick Road			Methodist	Methodist (widow of Frederick Oak Bell, optician and prominent Methodist)
Bence	Mary Margaret	Mrs	1s.	1921	87	(home duties) widow of George	Maisonette, Pittville		Lib	Methodist Wesleyan	obit 1934: Board of Guardians, Wesleyan Methodists St George Street church, helped husband in council elections as Liberals
Bence	Percy	Mr	1s.	x	46	[theatrical manager WWI army record; actor]	in Nottingham		Lib	Methodist	Liberal; WWI short service. Methodist family - son of Mary Margaret and George
Bence	Clarissa	Mrs	1s.	x	43	actress	in Nottingham				

Bence	Mary Elizabeth	Miss	5s.	1921	48	home duties (daughter of Mary Margaret)	Maisonette, Pittville		Lib	Methodist	Methodist; ward organiser for National Declaration ballot in 1934; Sunday School Union president and treasurer; Temperance; Liberal supporter. Ward Collector 1935
Bendall, Mrs	Jane	Mrs	1s.	1939	67	widow of Joseph E Bendall	Leckhampton Road		Con	CofE	d1950 YMCA; Conservative (husband had been active on Board of Guardians)
Benwall [Benwell], Miss	[Christina Mary]	Miss	2s.6d	1939	61	private means	12 Priory Street			CofE	obit 1946: daughter of a CofE clergyman
Berry, Mr H V	Hugh Victor	Mr	1s.	1939	46	incorporated accountant, married	Hales Road	1			servant in 1921; long serving secretary of Highbury church
Best, Rev J K	John Kenneth	Rev	5s.	1921	47	Master, Cheltenham College	Cheltenham College				
Bestwick, Mrs		Mrs	1s.	x							
Bevan, Mr and Mrs L V	Hilda Molly	Mrs	1s.	x	[30]	UDD	Christowe [boarding house]				in electoral roll 1937
Bevan, Mr and Mrs L V	Llewellyn Vaughan	Mr	1s.	1921	30	Cheltenham College master, married	Christowe [boarding house]				teacher
Bick	Kate	Mrs	1s.	x	65	UDD (wife of retired butcher)	Brevels Haye, Church Street, Charlton Kings			CofE	
Birley	C W (Cuthbert)	Rev	5s.	1939	71	clerk in holy orders	Moorend Park Road	2		CofE	
Blackford, Mrs	Alice	Mrs	1s.	1939	60	wife of W G, metal polisher	Marle Hill Parade			CofE St Paul	W G was elected people's warden at St Paul's church 1941
Blagg, Mr and Mrs	Lucy	Mrs	1s.	1921	49	UDD	Victoria Terrace		Lab		Labour
Blagg, Mr and Mrs	George	Mr	2s.6d	1921	49	Postal clerk then assistant superintendent PO	Victoria Terrace		Lab		Labour; LONU committee 1926
Bloodworth, Mr and Mrs	Marion Gwendoline	Mrs	1s.	1939	40		Priory Street			Highbury	Highbury church connection
Bloodworth, Mr and Mrs	Raymond Ward	Mr	2s.6d	1939	45	electrical engineer	Priory Street			Highbury	Highbury church connection

Bolton	Percy (MA)	Mr	£1	news	46	headteacher	Dean Close			CofE	LONU committee, LONU vice-president, RAF veteran, President of Cheltenham Science Society, Dean Close head teacher
Bond	J (John Stuart's wife Dorothy)	Mrs	10s.	1921	49	wife of schoolmaster and LONU officer	Cheltenham College	1			
Bond	John Stuart (life member)	Mr	£25	1921	48	school teacher	Toynnton, Battledown	1		CofE	Cheltenham College; LONU hon sec
Bond, Mr GD	Geoffrey D	Mr	5s.	1939	40	Director Health Food Store	130 Old Bath Road			Unitarian Bayshill	Hon. Sec. Theosophical Society and representative of Cheltenham Food Reform Group
Bond, Mrs GD	Eveline (wife of Geoffrey D)	Mrs	5s.	1939	37	UDD	130 Old Bath Road				
Booy	Ellen (mother of Anne)	Mrs	1s.	1921	52	married (with husband, plumber & builder & employer)	All Saints Road		Lab	CofE All Saints	Co-operative and Labour supporter and standing for council at All Saints 1945
Booy	Anne Elizabeth Wheeler	Miss	3s.6d	1921	26	[teacher]	All Saints Road				1938 German Speaking Club - talk on Anglo-German friendship (chairing member), former student of the Training College; (1940s teaching in Dutch East Indies); 1949 UNA
Boraston. Miss	Mabel E	Miss	1s.	1939	34	milliner's and draper's assistant	St James Square				
Boulton	T (widow of Thomas, Fanny)	Mrs	2s.	1939	69	private means	Thornton, Vittoria Walk	2			
Bowd, Mr	David Arthur	Mr	1s.	1921	67	Monumental Sculptor	St George's Place				
Box	H.O.(Harry Osborne)	Mr	1s.	1939	71	jeweller and watchmaker	High Street	1			
Brady Mrs A	Abigail	Mrs	1s.	1939	48	UDD, wife of Thomas (Capt - ex army)	Oxford House, Bath Road			CofE St Luke	St Luke's activities 1940s
Brasher	W H (William Henry)	Mr	5s.	1939	70	retired stationer	Langdon Grove Road, Charlton Kings				
Briggs	Annie	Mrs	10s.6d	1921	80	private means	The Lawn, Park Place				

Briggs	J (Joshua with wife Annie)	Mr	10s.6d	1921	75	retired merchant	The Lawn, Park Place	1			LONU Hon. Sec., Vice-chair
Brindley	Catherine (with May)	Mrs	1s.	1939	63	UDD	Selkirk Street				
Brindley	May	Miss	1s.	1939	29	UDD	Selkirk Street				
Broom, Mr	Harold Willams	Mr	1s.	1939	69	retired bank official	The Nest, Battledown Approach			Congreg Prestbury	obit 1944 senior deacon and superintendent of Sunday School at Prestbury Congregationalist chapel, missionary supporter
Broom, Mrs	Fanny M [wife of Harold]	Mrs	1s.	1939	56	UDD	The Nest, Battledown Approach			Congreg Prestbury	women's section of Prestbury Congregational chapel
Brown	Alice	Miss	1s.	1939	79	Retired dress maker	Sydenham Rd				
Brown, Miss J	Jessie Allan	Miss	5s.	1939	77	school mistress retired	Montpellier Terrace		Lib	Highbury	Nauntun Park School; Highbury Church women's council and youth group; Local Employment Committee member; National Council of Women
Brown, Mr L W	Lancelot W	Mr	4s.	1939	36	Teacher	Mead Road				Sec. of Cheltenham and District Peace Council founded in 1937
Brown, Mrs	?Elizabeth Taylor	Mrs	5s.	x	74	matron of institute for the blind, retired	Cromwell Road			CofE Holy Trinity	d1946 long connection with Holy Trinity
Brunner, Mr J	John	Mr	5s.	1921	38	Confectioner in partnership with Emil Krapf	High Street				Born in Switzerland
Bubb, Miss EM	Edith Mary	Miss	1s.	1921	73	Retired School teacher	Painswick Road				
Buckingham	(Ethel Maud)	Miss	3s.6d	1939	70	private school headmistress retired	Sandy Lane				
Buckle	J (widow of John - Grace)	Mrs	7s.6d.	1939	65	private means	The Kia, Brockworth		Con	CofE Brockworth	Conservative executive committee, Primrose League, WI Sec, Brockworth parish church committee member

Bullen	D (Dorothy A)	Miss	1s.	1939	43	Principal's administrative assistant Cheltenham Ladies College	Lansdown Crescent				
Bullock	Ethel	Mrs	1s.	1939	47	UDD	Warden Hill Road			Salem	
Bullock	Frederick C	Mr	1s.	1939	48	Travelling Pig agent	Warden Hill Road			Salem	Salem chapel organist
Bullock, Miss	Ethel D	Miss	2s.6d	1939	63	state registered nurse retired	Ryeworth Road, Charlton Kings	1		CofE St Mary Charlton Kings	Board of Guardians committee; Hospital Board; Charlton Kings school manager; living with brother, a retired civil engineer in 1939
Burd, Miss ME	Margaret Ethel	Miss	5s.	1939	70	private means	Westwood, Prestbury	1		CofE St Mary Prestbury	living with her two sisters; in 1911 she was living in Solihull with her brother a CofE clergyman; buried at Prestbury CofE
Burrow	E J (Edward John)	Mr	£1	news	76	publisher	London Road	1		CofE Holy Apostles	obituary 1935: former President of Rotary and Chamber of Commerce; Holy Apostles church member; LONU committee; LONU vice-president, FRGS
Burton, Mrs	Eliza M	Mrs	5s.	1939	59	wife of Brig General retired, India Army	Bafford Grange, Charlton Kings	3			Supporting Charlton Kings school (husband was chair of school managers, member of Charlton Kings Brotherhood and a councillor)
Bush, Mr Frank E	Frank E	Mr	5s.	1939	53	Hotel proprietor (Spa Hotel)	Torsend, Tirley				
Bush, Mr H T	Horace T	Mr	5s.	1939 + news	36	Company Secretary	Claremont Lodge, Montpellier Spa Road		Con		Chairman of Chamber of Commerce; Hon. Sec. of Conservative Association; town councillor

Butler, Mr W T	William T	Mr	1s.	1939	62	builder, pattern maker	Orrisdale Terrace				
Carrick, Miss	Ann E	Miss	3s.	1939	67	retired school mistress	St George's Street				
Carter, Miss F L	Frances Louisa	Miss	2s.	1939	48	employed at E Burrows (as company director of publishing, later set up own company 'New Centurion' with Alderman Bush)	Queens Road		Con		Cheltenham Conservative Association; a councillor; president of the Gloucestershir e Spiritual Community Centre
Cartledge, Mrs E C	Ethel Cooper	Mrs	£1.1s.-	1939	54	private means (widow) - living with the Misses M and L Snowdon	Christchurch Road	2			
Cassells, Mr and Mrs		Mrs	1s.								
Cassells, Mr and Mrs		Mr	1s.	x		no obvious Cheltenham connection					
Catley, Miss	Elsbeth	Miss	1s.	news		BA [school teacher]	Collingwood, St George's Road			Baptist Salem	Salem Baptist Church; Central School (with Miss O Wyatt); living with Wyatt and Yarnold
Caudle, Mr F J	Frederick John	Mr	1s.	1921	45	Boot and Shoe Manufacture r Upper Bath Road (foreman of John Caudle & Sons)	Springfield, Pitford Road		Lab		Obit 1938: active in Independent Labour Party; member of Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce; manager of Leckhampton School in 1933; oldest member of Cheltenham Employment Committee
Cayley, Mrs F		Mrs	1s.	x							
Chambertain Miss	Clara?	Miss	1s.	1933	45	employed at Dicks and Sons, costume and coat dept	Berkeley Place				living in hostel for Dicks employees - obit 1944: at Dicks for over 30 years
Chandler Mrs	Edith	Mrs	2s.	1939	55	manager of tailor's shop, widow of Harry Hayden	Inveresk, Hales Road			CofE All Saints	obit 1940: Cheltenham Music Festival Hon. Sec.; ex- teacher at Dunally; Chamber of Commerce [supports

											Chamber of Commerce candidate in borough council elections - 'nonpolitical'; All Saints funeral
Channon, Miss	Winifred Gertrude	Miss	1s.	1921	38	photographic artist	Lindfield, London Road			Baptist Salem	Salem Baptist Church strong family connection 1936; Cheltenham and District Sunday School Union - newly elected president in 1942
Chapman, Miss Ivelaw	Shirley	Miss	1s.	1921	38	father Joseph - a retired importer	Sandy Lane	2			
Cheshire, Mr and Mrs R A	Margaret	Mrs	1s.	1939	41	sub PO clerk	Lyefield Road West Charlton Kings				Free church
Cheshire, Mr and Mrs R A	Reginald A	Mr	1s.	1939	41	pharmacist	Lyefield Road West Charlton Kings				Cheltenham Free Church Council committee member
Chesney, Mr and Mrs	Annie M	Mrs	1s.	1939	66	UDD	Rosemary, Naunton Park Rd				
Chesney, Mr and Mrs	William H	Mr	1s.	1939	79	retired schoolmaster	Rosemary, Naunton Park Rd				
Chesters Mr and Mrs	Violet Alethea	Mrs	3s.	1939	47	UDD	Elmville North Place				
Chesters Mr and Mrs	John	Mr	3s.	1939	38	General manager of a garage	Elmville North Place				Air Cadets Commander in WWII
Child, Miss	Winifred Alice (daughter of M E)	Miss	2s.	1939	48	housekeeper to mother and brother??	Woodlands Road				
Child, Mrs Colin	Mary Ellen	Mrs	2s.	1939	82	private means (mother of Baptist Minister Robert)	Woodlands Road	2			
Chipp, Mr W R	Walter Robert	Mr	2s.6d	1939	76	house and estate agent retired	Glenview, Pilford Ave		Con		South Ward Conservative Committee (presiding), Board of Guardians
Christie, Dr M	Dr Anaple Frances Mary	Dr	2s.	1939	40	medical practitioner	York Terrace, St George's Road	2			National Council of Women; child welfare (psychiatrist, child guidance clinic)
Clapp, Mr E L	Edmund L	Mr	1s.	1939	43	plumber and electrician (self employed)	27 & 28 Bath Street				supported Lipson in 1937 parliamentary election

Clare, Mrs G M	Gertrude Maude	Mrs	1s.	1939	49	UDD, wife of wholesale newsagent	Thorndale, Sandford Mill Road				
Clarence, Miss	Edith Blanche	Miss	2s.	news		with Miss Fison	Detmore House		Lab	Unitarian Bayshill	Cheltenham Society for Equal Citizenship; Labour Party
Clarke, Miss	? Edith M, daughter of Gertrude	Miss	1s.	1939	24	stationer's assistant (shop)	Thorndale, Sandford Mill Road				
Clarke, Miss A K	Amy Key	Miss	5s.	1939	43	Housemistre ss CLC (Poet)	Astell House (CLC)				Ladies College; sub plus 10s donation
Clow, Dr and Dr Alice	Alice	Dr	5s.	1939	60	retired medical practitioner	Lilleybrook Rise Charlton Kings				
Clow, Dr and Dr Alice	David	Dr	5s.	1939	64	retired medical practitioner	Lilleybrook Rise Charlton Kings	2			Connected as medical officer for Post Office 1935
Coates, Miss	? Agnes Emma	Miss	1s.	1939	61	UDD	279 Old Bath Road				
Coates- Carter, Miss	Jacqueline Margaret Anne Coates	Miss	1s.	1921	39	The Manor House Prestbury 1928	Prestbury	1			Daughter of architect John Coates Carter
Cole, Mrs A N	Elizabeth Susan	Mrs	10s.6d	1932	70	(husband owned gents outfitter – 'The Famous')	St George's Road		Lib	Baptist Salem	Salem Baptist Church member; Liberal Association; widow of Abraham d.1932; active for international peace
Colwell, Mr E	Ernest	Mr	1s.6d.	1939	61	travelling agent for cattle feeding shop	Beechurst Avenue			Methodist Wesleyan	Cheltenham Wesleyan church; took chair at Cheltenham and District branch meeting ; Commercial Travellers Association member
Compton, Mr W C	William Edwin [C in error]	Mr	1s.	1939	64	Building Society assistant sec, retired, married	Eldorado Road			CofE Holy Trinity	C&G Building Society assistant sec. [colleague D Lewis on LONU committee]; Holy Trinity church warden; school manager for Trinity church; Girls Orphanage management committee member

Conder, Miss E M	Ethel Mary	Miss	5s.6d.	1939	76	retired teacher in 1939:	All Saints Villas Road	1		Highbury	obit 1942: Ladies College pupil, classics at Girton , Cambridge; member of Education Committee representing the Free Churches; school manager Gloucester Road Junior School, with Rev Barbara Thomas; she and Maria Hilling retired to Cheltenham together in 1928 after working together as teachers; president of Oxford Street Sisterhood, Highbury Congregational church; cousin of Clara Winterbotham; ward collector for LONU 1934
Conibear, Miss	Gladys	Miss	1s.	1939	32	assistant elementary school mistress [All Saints]	Priory Street				
Cook, Miss Heber	Elsie F Heber- Cook	Miss	£1	1939	53		Ryeworth Road Charlton Kings	2		CofE St Mary Charlton Kings	doors at Charlton Kings church in memory of mother Georgiana Helen 1934 widow of Reginald; donating to hospital appeal 1937; RVS
Cook, Mr and Mrs J J	Annie	Mrs	10s.6d	1921	76	UDD	Lansdown Terrace			Methodist	Ward Collector 1935
Cook, Mr and Mrs J J	John	Mr	10s.6d	1921	75	retired engineer	Lansdown Terrace			Methodist	Methodist missionary
Cooke, Mr H E	Herbert Edward	Mr	1s.	1939	47	dairyman, married	220 Swindon Road				WWI veteran
Cooke, Rev and Mrs J J D	John James Dunn	Rev	1s.	1921	68	vicar of Churchdown , retired	Churchdown			CofE	retired 1935
Cooke, Rev and Mrs J J D	Miriam	Mrs	1s.	1921	73	UDD	Churchdown			CofE	
Cooper, Mr T	Thomas	Mr	1s.6d.	1939	71	retired police officer	Copt Elm Road				C K Brotherhood, member of

											Cambray Church
Corbett, Mr T W	Thomas J White-Corbett	Mr	1s.	1939	52	dental mechanic retired	Selkirk Street				d.1941, funeral at All Saints
Cornell, Miss	Bridget	Miss	1s.	1921	30	Born in S. Africa; living with uncle, a farmer	Arle Road				
Cossins, Miss	Phyllis May	Miss	1s.	1921	35	stenographer in publishers office (Burrows in 1921)	Brighton Road				with Miss Edith Field; ward collector for LONU 1934
Coughlin, Rev Father OSB	John A	Rev	5s.	1939	56	Minister of religion	St Gregory's Priory			Catholic	
Cox, Mr S R	? Sidney George	Mr	1s.	1939	56	motorcycle dealer	Old Bath Road				
Cox, Mrs	Ellen	Mrs	1s.6d.	1939	66	UDD, widow of William T, fruiterer, Calcutta Stores	St George's Road			CofE Christ Church	obit 1941: Christ Church Mothers Union
Cox, Mrs	?Emily, wife of Sidney	Mrs	3s.	x	61	UDD	Old Bath Road				
Coxwell-Rogers, Rev A M	Augustus Mead	Rev	2s.6d	news	77	retired minister	Rodney Road				d.1935
Cridland, Mrs	Phyllis Howard	Miss	1s.	1939	30	UDD married to company director of builders merchant	Sandy Lane				
Crofts, Mr J F	John Francis	Mr	£1	1939	89	Assistant schoolmaster, retired	Tatchley Retreat, Prestbury				Ward Collector 1935; 1937 sec. of Prestbury PCC
Crook, Miss	Ethel Mary	Miss	1s.	1921	51	Headteacher Holy Trinity 1921	Up Hatherley				Nauntun Park School head teacher in 1934, d.1936
Currie, Miss	Enid Mary	Miss	2s.	1939	59	independent means	Sydenham Villas Road	1			
Currie, Mr J C	John Gavin Drummond	Mr	5s.	1939	40	surgeon	Royal Crescent	2			
Cypher, Miss	Ethel Bessie	Miss	1s.	1939	48	formerly registered nurse private	St Georges Road	1		CofE Christ Church	Christ Church parish events; Missionary Society
Daft, Mr A G	Arthur George	Mr	1s.	1921	45	grocer					
Dale Mrs E	Constance Ellen	Mrs	1s.	1939	51	UDD, wife of Ernest, joiner	34 Hales Road		Lab	Nonconformist	A Mrs Dale was singing at a Central Brotherhood events 1930s; Labour Party social fundraising events, 1932 and 1933
Dallimore Miss C	Constance	Miss	1s.	1939	37	school teacher in 1921	Lansdown Crescent			CofE	St Johns Junior school, Hon sec Dickens Society

Dartnell, Miss S	Stella Mary	Miss	5s.	1939	40	school teacher in 1921, UDD 1939 (living with parents, both retired)	Winstonian Road			CofE Holy Apostles	Holy Apostles Sunday School superintendent ; 1934 has offered to help LONU as collector
Dashwood, Miss J	Jane Hope de Courcy	Miss	1s.	1939	68	private means	Prestbury Road			Catholic	Women's Catholic League
Daubeney, Mrs and Miss	Mabel	Mrs	5s.	1939	74	private means, widow	Tatchley House, Prestbury	1		CofE St Mary Prestbury	late husband ex-military (RN)
Daubeney, Mrs and Miss	Marjorie Josephine	Miss	5s.	1939	45	retired teacher, now incapacitated	Tatchley House, Prestbury			CofE St Mary Prestbury	ex-teacher Ladies College
Davey, Miss H	?Ruth	Miss	1s.	1921	35	children's hospital nurse	nurses accommodation				
Davies Mr and Mrs Walter	Ruby Muriel	Mrs	1s.	1921	47	??	Westbourne House, Pittville Circus Road				
Davies, Mr and Mrs Walter	Walter Harold	Mr	1s.	1921	69	barrister	Westbourne House, Pittville Circus Road	1			
Davies, Rev and Mrs	David FJ	Rev	1s.	1939	34	clerk in holy orders				CofE Christ Church	curate of Christ Church (1935 moved to Nailsworth)
Davies, Rev and Mrs	Ada	Mrs	1s.	1939	36	UDD					
Davis, Major H Stratton, MC	Harold	Major	1s.	1921	50	Veteran, architect, diocesan surveyor	Briarfield, Libertus Road				
Davis, Mrs and Miss D	Agnes	Mrs	1s.	1939	71	dressmaker (1921), UDD widow of Charles, plumber	Fairview Road		Lab	CofE St Paul	supporting Packenham at Labour Hall (pianist)
Davis, Mrs and Miss D	Dorothy, daughter ('Dora' in 1932 sub list)	Miss	1s.	1939	35	1921: toymaker 1939: paid domestic duties [looking after widowed mother]	Fairview Road			CofE St Paul	married 1939 in St Pauls
Davy, Mrs		Mrs	1s.	x							
Dawes, Miss	? Beatrice	Miss	1s.	1939	43	arts and crafts handiwork, semi-invalid (father a joiner)	Copt Elm Road				
de Nieures, Miss	Marie Eugenie	Miss	3s.6d	1939	70	retired nurse	Garden House				
Deacon, Miss	Hilda Mary	Miss	1s.	1939	28		Leckhampton Road				daughter of E W D; 'M.A.' married in 1935 to Hector Burdett, Ministry of Food
Deacon, Mr and Mrs E W	Mary	Mrs	1s.	1921	51	UDD (d1938)	Leckhampton Road				

Deacon, Mr and Mrs E W	Ernest William	Mr	3s.6d	1939	55	borough treasurer	Leckhampton Road				Hon Treasurer, LONU for many years (1940s)
Dent, Miss	Agnes?	Miss	2s.6d	news	71	private means	Heathfield, Hales Road	1		CofE All Saints	All Saints (funeral 1939)
Derrick, Mrs	? Edith	Mrs	3s.6d	1939	71	independent means	Royal Crescent	1			
Dimmer, Miss	Ethel	Miss	5s.	1921	56	private means	Cotteswold, Leckhampton				daughter of George, one time mayor d.1927
Dobson, Mr and Mrs R	Ruth	Mrs	1s.	1939	45	UDD	Berkhampstead, Hewlett Road				?
Dobson, Mr and Mrs R	Richard	Mr	1s.6d.	1939	57	headmaster	Berkhampstead, Hewlett Road	1			Headmaster of Grammar School, MA, LONU vice-president
Drake, Mr and Mrs	Annie	Mrs	1s.	1939	63	?	Columbia Place				
Drake, Mr and Mrs	Frederick	Mr	1s.	1939	76	draper (Drake and Co)	Columbia Place				
Drake, Mrs Alfred	Mina/Nina	Mrs	10s.	news		widow	Charlton Kings		Con	CofE Holy Apostles	Holy Apostles Church member; husband Alfred and Nina both keen Conservatives (Primrose League) d.1928. Nina officer in Ladies Linen League (Hospital)
Drew, Miss		Miss	1s.	x		[teacher]					Ladies College geography teacher, retired 1934; ?post-war chair of Business and Professional Women's Association
du Bruel, Lt Col F A	Frederick Alexander	Lt Col.	£1	1939	62	Lieut Colonel retired	Dumfries House, Royal Parade, Bayshill Road	1			
Ducat, Mrs	Ellen/Hele n Mitchell	Mrs	5s.	1939	68	widow of Lt Claude (Indian Army)	Park Place				Committee of LONU; living with the Misses Moores in 1939. Ward collector 1935
Duckworth, Misses	Clementin a E	Miss	1s.	1921	74	Domestic Science college teacher (1921)	St George's Road				Father was a clergyman
Duckworth, Misses	Salleen	Miss	1s.	1921	77		St George's Road				Father was a clergyman
Dye, Mr AG	Arthur	Mr	3s.6d	1939	48	school teacher	Old Bath Road				LONU hon. general seretary c1935, Dickens

											Society member
Earingay, Mrs	Florence	Mrs	1s.	news	58	BA London, barrister	Wellington Square				wife of Dr William E, barrister; prominent suffragist, led WFL
East, Miss N A	Noreen Annie	Miss	1s.	1939	25	Civil Service Clerk	Grosvenor Street				daughter of a signalman
East, Mrs	Annie, mother of N A	Mrs	1s.	1939	67	UDD	Grosvenor Street				
Eaton, Mr W F	William Francis	Mr	1s.	1921	64	Bowling club groundsman	Stoke Orchard				
Edwards, Mr F H	Frank Howard	Mr	1s.	1921	42	gents outfitter, High Street	Delmar, Montpellier Terrace				Rotarian; LONU committee 1927
Edwards, Mr Norman	Norman	Mr	5s.	1939	55	schoolmaster	Laurel Lodge, Wellington Square	1			Hon Sec of YMCA
Edwards, Mrs	?Annie wife of Norman	Mrs	1s.	1939	46	UDD	Laurel Lodge, Wellington Square				
Edwards, Mrs D Vivien	Bertha Vivien	Mrs	£3.3s.-	x	57	wife of James Herbert, electrical engineer	Woodside, Cranham				1930s husband supporting district nursing association and Scouts (gift of site in 1944); d.1944
Eggleton, Mr G A	?Edward [E for G easy to mistake]	Mr	1s.	1921	65	master builder d.1937	Tewkesbury Road				
Eland, Mrs	Mary Elizabeth?	Mrs	1s.	news		widow	Pittville Lawn			CofE St Paul	St Paul's church member 1935
Ellery, Mr and Mrs M	Elizabeth	Mrs	1s.	1939	53	UDD	Leckhampton Road				
Ellery, Mr and Mrs M	(John) Montague	Mr	1s.	1939	65	retired banker	Leckhampton Road				supporting Lipson 1937; friends of Deacon (at funeral)
Ellis, Rev E Mostyn	Ernest Mostyn	Rev	5s.	news	63	minister of religion, All Saints	All Saints Road			CoE	
Emlyn, Dr and Mrs	Arthur	Dr	4s.	1939	65	medical practitioner & UDD	131 Leckhampton Rd		Lib	Presbyt St Andrew	Chairman of Grove Street Mission & speaker at Charlton Kings Brotherhood; obit 1940 at St Andrews Presbyterian church (elder), missionary in Nigeria, doctor in St Paul's, vice-chair of Liberal Association, supporter of Temperance Movement

Emlyn, Dr and Mrs	Christian A.	Mrs	3s.6d	1939	60	UDD	131 Leckhampton Rd			Presbyt St Andrew	On committee of Total Abstinence Society (sister Miss Catherine Rogers)
Evans, Miss A	Annie Emma	Miss	1s.	news	85	[private means]	Stanmer House, Lypiatt Road			CofE All Saints	d.1937 All Saints funeral; daughter of a rector
Evans, Miss W A	Winifred Annie	Miss	1s.	1921	40	elementary school teacher	All Saints Rd				
Evans, Mr and Mrs A C	Edith M	Mrs	1s.	1939	51	UDD	Gloucester Road				
Evans, Mr and Mrs A C	Arthur C	Mr	1s.	1939	43	solicitors manager clerk	Gloucester Road				
Evans, Mr G H	George Henry?	Mr	£1-	1939	47	male nurse	Sandford Street/Sandford Mill Road				
Eyre, Miss	Kate	Miss	5s.	news	77	PO Savings Bank staff officer retired (1921, in Prestbury)	Pittville Parade		Con		Hon. Sec Women's Conservative Association wrote column 'Women's Point of View' (friend of Annie Hodges)
Eyre, Mrs C	Constance Mary	Mrs	1s.	1921	78		Lansdown Crescent				d.1934. Late husband John Edward Addis Eyre - India connection
Fairclough, Miss C		Miss	1s.	news						Methodist Wesleyan	Wesleyan Girl Guides Captain (News)
Faithfull, Miss L	Lillian Mary	Miss	3s.6d	news	70	retired Principal of Cheltenham Ladies College	Bayshill Road				
Farthing, Miss L	Lilian	Miss	1s.	1939	57	UDD	Alstone Ave			Methodist Wesleyan	St Marks Wesleyan Sunday School connection
Faulkner, Mr F A	Frederick Arthur	Mr	1s.	1921	72	Bank accountant	Cheltondale Villas, Orrisdale Terrace				chess club
Fergusson, Miss	Sarah Faith	Miss	3s.6d	1921	46	librarian	Lechantone, Charlton Lane				
Fergusson, Miss J D	Jean Dalrymple sister of Sarah	Miss	1s.	1921	53	violin/music teacher	Lechantone, Charlton Lane				
Fforde, Miss G R	Gwendole n Rowan	Miss	2s.6d	news	35	qualified nurse	District Nurses Home St James's Sq				
Fielder, Miss G M	Gertrude Minnie	Miss	1s.	news						CofE	St Peter's church fete (news)
Fieldhouse, Miss D E	Dorothy	Miss	2s.6d	1939	41	elementary school teacher	Highclere, Harp Hill				
Finch, Mr and Mrs	Alice	Mrs	10s.	1939	85	retired school teacher (both)	Park Place			Unitarian Bayshill	unitarian

Finch, Mr and Mrs	William A	Mr	10s.	1939	74	retired school teacher (both)	Park Place			Unitarian Bayshill	LONU hon finance secretary (1934), committee
Fison, Miss	Alice Margaret	Miss	3s.6d	news		with Miss Clarence	Detmore		Lab		Cheltenham Society for Equal Citizenship; Labour Party
Fletcher, Miss	Edith Jane	Miss	1s.	1939	64	retired masseuse/nurse (living with sister)	Argyle Lawn, 115 Old Bath Road			CofE Holy Apostles?	Uncle's funeral at Holy Apostles 1933 (left money to his 2 nieces)
Foster, Miss	Georgina Blanch	Miss	1s.	1939	53	private means	Royal Crescent				
Fowles, Mr and Mrs R	Leonora Mildred	Mrs	1s.	1939	20		19 Bath Parade				
Fowles, Mr and Mrs R	Reginald Fitzroy	Mr	1s.	1939	31	Auctioneer, valuer, insurance agent	19 Bath Parade				
Fox, Miss	[G E]	Miss	1s.	1921	55	qualified nurse	Suffolk Road				living with Rev. Barbara Thomas in 1930s
Foxwell, Miss	Ellen	Miss	1s.	1939	85	retired (hotel housekeeper)	All Saints Road			CofE All Saints	All Saints church 'prominent worker' (obit 1940)
Foxwell, Mr and Mrs	Jane Leonora	Mrs	2s.6d	1939	65	home duties	11 London Road				
Foxwell, Mr and Mrs	Henry Arthur	Mr	2s.6d	1939	75	retired bank official	11 London Road	1			keen chess player (Lipson president of club)
Francis, Miss Joyce	Joyce H	Miss	1s.	1921	23	musician	Hallan Road, Leckhampton			Highbury	LRAM certificate 1935; married J L Jefferies, solicitor
Freeguard, Mrs	Elizabeth Pringle	Mrs	2s.6d	1921	58	teacher St Luke's CofE	Albert Place, Pittville				
Fry, Mr and Mrs F J	Frederick John	Mr	1s.	1939	76	retired school teacher	Cirencester Road				Charlton Kings district councillor and CK Scout Group
Fry, Mr and Mrs F J	Caroline	Mr	1s.	1939	76	home duties	Cirencester Road				Charlton Kings Girls Friendly Society and CK District Nursing Society treasurer
Fuller, Mr T H	Thomas Hugh	Mr	1s.	1939	63	master nurseryman (employer)	38 London Road				
Fulton, Miss	Esme	Miss	1s.	1939	43	independent means	45 Leckhampton Road			CofE	Sunday School superintendent teacher (Leckhampton church)
Gabb, Mr and Mrs	? Alice	Mrs	1s.	1939	58	UDD	Heathfield, The Avenue, Charlton Kings				

Gabb, Mr and Mrs	? Harry Escott	Mr	1s.6d.	1939	70	retired hotelier	Heathfield, The Avenue, Charlton Kings				
Garne, Miss M	? Edith M J	Miss	2s.	1939	76	private means (living with sister Flora)	Rodney Road				
Gem, Canon H A	Hubert Arnold	Canon	5s.	news	81	retired clergyman (1930) MA	Old Bath Road			CofE	Poor health but active supporting church
Gibbons, Mr and Mrs H Ruffell	Herbert R	Mr	2s.6d	1939	52	bank manager	2 Malvern Place	1	Con		British Legion member, Borough Councillor 1933, Conservative
Gibbons, Mr and Mrs H Ruffell	Doris M	Mrs	1s.	1939	43	UDD	2 Malvern Place				
Gibbs, Misses M E and E F	Ethel Mary	Miss	1s.	1921	56	In business with their father in woollen and needlework shop, Montpellier Walk	Park Place			Presbyt St Andrew	Father(Willam) d.1931 an elder of the Presbyterian Church; two brothers (Ivan and Edgar) were killed in war, another brother (Arthur), survived.
Gibbs, Misses M E and E F	Edith Florence	Miss	1s.	1921	50	As above	Park Place			Presbyt St Andrew	As above
Gibbs, Mrs	Bessie Harriet	Mrs	1s.	1921	85	UDD - Widow	Park Place				
Gibby, Miss M	Martha	Miss	1s.	1939	71	cook-housekeeper retired	Hewlett Road				(news)
Gilbert, Mr	? Mr John Gilbert	Mr	1s.	1939	49	civil servant Post Office Engineering Dept	18 Alstone Ave				
Gilder, Miss L T		Miss	1s.	news	x	x	Keynsham Road			CofE All Saints	LONU ward collector 1934; All Saints church member; District Scouts
Gilkes, Mr J H	John Henry	Mr	1s.	1939	65	retired postal inspector	Swindon Road			CofE St Peter	wife nee Lane retired as teacher from Swindon Road School in 1935; churchwarden at St Peter's
Godsell, Mrs A C	??wife of Albert Charles	Mrs	5s.	news	70	apartment house-keeper	Bath Parade				Albert Charles had Salvation Army connection and was convicted of fraud 1935 - wife described as treasurer
Goldsmith, Surgeon-Major	Septimus G	Surg-Major	2s.6d	1921	84	Indian Medical Service, retired	York Terrace	2		CofE St Matthews	D. 1935

Goodall, Mrs		Mrs	2s.6d	x	x						
Gorman, Mrs	Helen Maud	Mrs	2s.6d	1939	72	widow (of Clarence, rector of Evenlode, clergyman, died 1934)	College Road (nursing home)				
Gough, Mrs A E	Fanny, wife of Arthur Ernest (d.1943)	Mrs	2s.6d	1939	69	UDD, wife of retired commercial traveller	Amberley Court, Clarence Square			CofE All Saints	All Saints church members, husband with Joshua M B on Robins Committee 1912 (charity) and PCC (1933)
Gower, Mrs	Mary widow of Alfred	Mrs	1s.	1939	70	private means, widow	Kensington Ave (off Queens Road)				
Green, Miss F	?Florence Gertrude	Miss	1s.	1939	45	sick nurse 1921; helping brother with farm work 1939	Park Place				
Green, Mr J T	John Theodore	Mr	£1	1939	83	cotton merchant retired	Battledown Approach			All Saints (parochial Church Council)	Donated to Cheltenham Hospital Fund
Green, Mrs H		Mrs	1s.	x	x						
Green, Rev F M		Rev	3s.6d	news	x	rector of Abenhall					
Greenaway, Miss	Lilian Annie	Miss	1s.	1939	43	school teacher	Lyefield Road East Charlton Kings				Charlton Kings infants school head teacher from 1929; Charlton Kings urban district council member 1937
Greenwood, Miss J	Mary J	Miss	1s.	1939	25	UDD (with mother) and VAD nursing	Hewlett Road				
Gregory, Mr C K	Charles Kingley	Mr	£1	1939	49	wine merchant	Pittville Lawn				chairman of Cheltenham Town FC (pharmacist in 1920s)
Griffin, Mrs	?Lucy	Mrs	1s.	1939	79	UDD	Byron Road				attending Pruen's funeral with many LONU members. ?wife of Thomas Griffin, Superintendent Police officer
Griffiths-Jones, Miss	Dorothy Edith	Miss	3s.6d	1939	56	UDD (living with incapacitated mother)	Goldington, Evesham Road	2	Lib		Liberal family (mother Edith Jane of Marle Hill's funeral in news)
Grimes, Miss	Louisa	Miss	1s.	1939	55	elementary schoolteacher	Shurdington Road				St James Junior School (left 1942)

Grove, Mr and Mrs S R	Sidney Reed	Mr	2s.	1939	69	master printer	Harp Hill Villas		Lib	Wesley Church St George's Str.	Treasurer of Free Church Council in 1920, Lipson supporter in 1937. Chairman of the Cheltenham Town A.F.C.. and associated with the Wesleyan cause in Cheltenham, taking especial interest in the young men and boys of the working-class district around Wesley Church. Hosted Liberal Association meetings (Vice-Chair).
Grove, Mr and Mrs S R	Edith	Mrs	1s.	1939	69	UDD	Harp Hill Villas				
Gurney, Mr and Mrs Brian	Dorothy H	Mrs	10s.6d	1939	42	UDD	Coronation Road (off Prestbury Road)		Lib	Highbury	
Gurney, Mr and Mrs Brian	Brian Taunton	Mr	10s.6d	1939	41	solicitor	Coronation Road (off Prestbury Road)		Lib	Highbury	Chair of Liberal Association, County Councillor
Gurney, Mrs W G	Emily Constance , Brian's mother	Mrs	5s.	1939	77	widow	Wellington Square		Lib	Highbury	with daughter, Gwyneth, Domestic science teacher; late husband Walter a solicitor and a Liberal
Gwyther, Mrs	Susan E	Mrs	1s.	1939	43	widow, UDD, ARP warden	Old Bath Road		Lib	Presbyt St Andrew	St Andrews Presbyterian member; Women's Organising Committee of the Liberal Society
Haig Col H de Haga	Herbert	Col	4s.	1939	80	retired British Army, married	Malvern Road	2			obit 1945: keen amateur gardener, army career abroad, retired 1906, member of the New Club, friend of Theodore Roosevelt; Cheltenham Science Society member
Hallett Rev J H	?D H - Dennis Harold	Rev	2s.6d	1939	27	clerk in holy orders, unmarried	Pittville Parade			CofE St Paul	educated at Clifton College and Durham Uni; curate of

											St Paul's 1931-1935 then Chelmsford, Essex
Halliday Mr and Mrs F E		Mrs	1s.			[wife of teacher]					
Halliday Mr and Mrs F E		Mr	1s.	news		school teacher					Cheltenham College PE staff and OTC Lieutenant, resigned commission 1935; year's leave of absence granted 1938
Hamlet Mr G	Francis Brook Greville	Mr	1s.	1939	63	Shop Keeper Antiques	Bath Street				Trustee of Charlton Kings Club and Institute (1933)
Hancock, Miss B	Bessie - sister of Norah	Miss	1s.	1939	38	private means	Fairview Road			Methodist Wesleyan	Wesleyan Methodist church member; BWTAU
Hancock, Miss Norah	Norah	Miss	1s.	1939	39	private means (living with elderly lady, incapacitated)	206 Prestbury Road			Wesleyan	Wesleyan Methodist church member (d.1944)
Hanks, Mr and Mrs R G	Muriel	Mrs	1s.	1939	58	UDD	Shurdington			Baptist	
Hanks, Mr and Mrs R G	Reginald Graham	Mr	1s.	1939	58	farmer	Shurdington			Baptist	chairman National Farmers' Union, JP.
Harper, Mrs	Jane Maria (Mrs Fred)	Mrs	5s.	1939	72	widow, private means	Douro lodge, Douro Road		Lib	Methodist	Mrs Fred Harper at League of Mercy meeting 1934 and Women's Missionary work 1930s; Wesleyan connection (at funeral of Miss Emma Riley); Harpers reported at meeting with Liberal Association and nonconformists linked with LONU
Harper, Mrs	?Charlotte	Mrs	1s.	1939	74	widow, OAP	Mersey Road (off Hewlett Road)				
Harrington Mr and Mrs F	Edith A	Mrs	£1.1s.	1939	51	UDD	Nashville, Hales Road		Lib	CofE St John	
Harrington Mr and Mrs F	Frank	Mr	£1.1s.	1939	53	master tailor and furrier retired	Nashville, Hales Road		Lib	CofE St John	d.1943; Liberal Association member and hon. treasurer; treasurer of St John's parish church

Harrington, Misses	Mary Lucy (sisters to Frank Harrington)	Miss	1s.	1939	78	retired [boarding house keepers 1901]	Victoria Terrace			CofE St Paul	
Harrington, Misses	Charlotte Blanche (sisters to Frank Harrington)	Miss	1s.	1939	69	retired [boarding house keepers 1901]	Victoria Terrace				
Harris, Miss A	Catherine Annie, daughter of George and Catherine	Miss	1s.	1939	25	builder's clerk and typist	Old Bath Road			Highbury	1934 Pates Old Girls event; 1939 Highbury Church member 'Good Companions'
Harris, Miss M		Miss	1s.	x	x						
Harris, Mr and Mrs	Catherine	Mrs	2s.6d	1939	60	secretary	Old Bath Road			Highbury	
Harris, Mr and Mrs	George	Mr	2s.6d	1939	63	builder's manager	Old Bath Road			Highbury	Highbury Congregational Church (deacon) and Pilley Zion Chapel
Harrison, Miss	Constance	Miss	1s.	1939	66	UDD	Holmdale, Pittville Circus	2		Unitarian Bayshill	Unitarian garden fete in Leckhampton with Barbara Thomas 1934; elected to All Saints PCC
Hart, Miss		Miss	1s.	news							Miss Hart at various funerals including with Conservatives
Hart, Miss S W	Sarah?	Miss	1s.	news					Lib		Liberal Association outing 1936, at funeral of Monro Briggs 1945; Aid to Russia fundraising 1944
Hartland, Miss M E	Mary Ethel	Miss	1s.	1939	56	unpaid dd	Rushworth, London Road	2			
Harvey Miss G	Georgina ?	Miss	1s.	news		?teacher					1940 Domestic Science teacher giving exhibition at Naunton Park
Harvey, Miss	?Fanny	Miss	1s.	1939	34	paid domestic duties (for her aunts)	London Road				
Harvey, Mr Fred	?Frederick	Mr	1s.	news			Sevenhampton or Chedworth?				wife's death on cycle reported
Haslam, Mr and Mrs	Mary	Mrs	2s.6d	1939	69		St James Square			Baptist Salem	
Haslam, Mr and Mrs	Frederick William	Mr	2s.6d	1939	67	cabinet maker furniture dealer, housewife	St James Square			Baptist Salem	Salem Baptist church member, Chamber of Commerce member, d1939

Hathway, Miss	Ethel Gertrude	Miss	1s.	1939	43	headteacher	Sevenhampton			CofE	headmistress Sevenhampton School (news) 1930-1937 then Cromhall School; Charlton Abbotts WI press secretary 1937, knows R G Hanks
Haynes, Mrs	Kathleen	Mrs	1s.	1921	80	(of Col. Frederick Hutchinson d.1929)	London Road 1930			CofE St Mark	Members of St Mark's church 1920s; Kathleen living in the Regent's Hotel 1934, widow of a colonel, nee Kavanagh; Gloucestershire Spiritualists; survivor of the Lucknor Seige, d.1935
Hayward Mrs	Amy Lydia	Mrs	1s.	1939	46	wife of assistant schoolteacher	Tivoli Lane				
Henwood Miss H	Elizabeth H - one of the three sisters	Miss	1s.	1939	64						
Henwood, Miss	Kate, Elizabeth H and Amy Louisa all sisters	Miss	1s.	1939	65	private means [living with widowed mother? Fanny]	Cirencester Road	1			father a lacemaker employing 5 women (1921)
Herbert Miss E M	Ethel Maud	Miss	1s.	1921	64	St Mary's Training College - Physical Training lecturer (d1936)	Glengar, formerly of Suffolk Mansions				Girls' Patriotic Club YMCA 1919; acting president of Cheltenham United Girls Clubs (physical drills) 1936
Herdman, Mr D W	Daniel W	Mr	1s.	1939	55	public librarian and curator of art gallery and museum	Kingsley Gardens St Marks			Methodist	Charlton Kings Brotherhood speaker 1936, NALGO conference 1934, Historical Association member 1934
Heygate Canon A	Ambrose	Canon	3s.6d	1939	83	married clerk in holy orders retired	Lansdown Parade				d.1941, had travelled widely and married in Newfoundland
Hicks Mrs	?Edith Blanche	Mrs	1s.	1939	67	married to traveller in printing trade	Cleeve View Road				Tosio boarded with them for 2 years before going to Switzerland

Hill Mrs P R	Alise/Alice Mary (married Philip Rowland)	Mrs	3s.6d	1939	60	retired teacher and wife of retired coffee planter	Charlton Kings				attending Mrs Briggs funeral as family mourners
Hillier Miss	Amelia Lucy	Miss	1s.	1939	65	Retired	Flat. Lisle House, Clarence Sq		Con	CofE Holy Trinity	East Ward Conservative; Holy Trinity Church Council elected 1941; Zenana Mission
Hilling Miss	Maria Ellen	Miss	2s.6d	1939	78	Teacher, retired	Longfleet, All Saints Villas Road				Retired in 1939; school manager Gloucester Road Junior (with Rev. Barbara Thomas); member of Oxford Street Sisterhood (Highbury Congregational Church) with Miss E M Conder who she lives with
Hobbs Rev C	Charles	Rev	5s.	1921	77	Baptist minister	Paragon Terrace				d.1935
Hodges, Miss	Annie Jane	Miss	5s.	1921	71	PO Savings Bank First Class Clerk retired	Pittville Parade	1		Gas Green	Connection with Gas Green Chapel
Hoggett Mr C J	Christophe r James	Mr	1s.	1921	64	professional musician, leader of Municipal Orchestra (d.1934 but correct)	1 Columbia Place				
Holder, Mr R M W	Ronald Malcolm Winning	Mr	2s.6d	1930	27	living with parents	Glenwyttan, Battledown	1			father a retired corn merchant
Holliday, Mrs and Miss	Harriet	Mrs	2s.6d	1921	84	private means	Leckhampton Road	1	Lib	Baptist Salem	Harriet died in late 1934, member of Salem Church, widow of Liberal Alderman, director of C&G Building Society, d.1918
Holliday, Mrs and Miss	Sarah	Miss	2s.6d	1921	37	private means	Leckhampton Road				daughter of Harriet
Hollins Mr C		Mr	1s.	news	x		?Sevenhampton/ Charlton Abbots			CofE	people's warden Sevenhampton church 1948
Holman, Miss E M		Miss	1s.	news	x						
Holme Mrs Kingston	Eliza Catherine	Mrs	1s.	1939	80	private means (widow)	Kingston, Shaw Green Lane, Prestbury				British Empire Leprosy Relief Association

											exhibition committee 1938
Holmes, Miss D	Dunstan	Miss	1s.	1939	40	assistant teacher	Hewlett Road			CofE All Saints	All Saints Church (funeral of sister); Dunstan teacher at All Saints Senior School
Home, Lt-Col J E	John Elton	Lt-Col	2s.6d	1939	57	Lt Col, Royal Indian Army, retired	Nagasa, 12 Old Bath Road				British Legion Cheltenham branch member 1930s; LONU ward collector 1934; d.1947
Hooper, Mr and Mrs	Lucy	Mrs	1s.	1939	63	UDD	Arle Road				
Hooper, Mr and Mrs	Edward	Mr	1s.	1939	65	manager of hardware store retired	Arle Road				Brother-in-law JT Lusty prominent Wesleyan
Hooper, Mr Geo	George	Mr	3s.6d	1921	46	printer, widower	Lansdown Crescent			Baptist Cambray	business in Suffolk Parade; d.1939 'shy and retiring'
Hopkins, Mr and Mrs	Elizabeth E	Mrs	1s.	1939	57	UDD	3 Maudville, Swindon Road		Lab		Mrs Hopkins a LONU ward organiser for National Declaration 1934 and a Labour candidate in Borough Council for Pittville Ward 1933 having previously stood for St Peters ward. Prominent Labour.
Hopkins, Mr and Mrs	Henry	Mr	1s.	1939	60	GWR railway shunter	2 Maudville, Swindon Road		Lab		Labour [supporting his wife].
Horne, Miss S	Nurse Sarah	Miss	1s.	news		nurse	Priory Street				1935 in Priory Street with Rev Jose Gueritz; appears as Nurse Horn representing Rev. Gueritz attending funerals
Horsefield, Rev D F	Douglas Frederick	Rev	5s.	news	39	Dean Close school chaplain	Dean Close School			CofE	Cheltenham Central Brotherhood speaker 1935
Hough, Miss B	Alice	Miss	1s.	1911	81	teacher of violin	Queens Circus				United Girls Club supporter 1933; Alice Harriet also ran needlework business

Howard Miss		Miss	1s.	news		Ladies College staff 1938					
Howard Mr R F	Ralph Fordham	Mr	1s.	1939	23	radio engineer, married	Clarence Street			CofE	buried in Anglican churchyard
Howell Coun J	John	CC	3s.6d	1939	66	surgeon	Imperial Square	2	Con		house surgeon at hospital; promoting the spa; borough councillor Pittville Ward representing Chamber of Commerce 1933 (Conservative/independent); president of chamber of commerce; Rotary; mayor in 1937; friend of Lipson; CBE
Hoy Miss	Gertrude	Miss	1s.	news	67	domestic nurse	Imperial Square			Methodist Wesleyan	
Hudson Mr AE	Albert Edward	Mr	3s.6d	1921	71	chief sanitary inspector inspector of nuisances in 1921)	Shakespeare Road			Methodist St Mark	St Marks Methodist Brotherhood; Unemployment Club - long public service (obit 1935)
Hudson Mrs and Miss	Agnes M	Mrs	1s.	1939	83	OAP retired, widow	Victoria Terrace				
Hudson Mrs and Miss	Agnes H	Miss	1s.	1939	55	Manageress, Dyers	Victoria Terrace				
Hull Miss	Henrietta Maria	Miss	10s.	1939	79	private means [daughter of a cattle dealer]	Berkeley St			CofE Holy Apostles	d.1941 legacy to Holy Apostles; 1937 gift to District Nursing Assoc.
Hullah Mr J	John	Mr	1s.	1939	59	retired Indian Civil Service	Lansdown Court, Malvern Road	1		CofE Christ Church	members of Christ Church (funeral of wife 1935)
Humphreys, Mr and Mrs	Mary Ellen [Humphris]	Mrs	1s.	1921	70	UDD	Charlton Kings			CofE St Mary Charlton Kings	
Humphreys, Mr and Mrs	Arthur [Humphris]	Mr	1s.	1921	70	stonemason	Charlton Kings			CofE St Mary Charlton Kings	d.1945; worked for H. H. Martyn; Order of Buffaloes
Hurcombe, Mr and Mrs	Agnes?	Mrs	1s.	1939	28	UDD	Portland Street				
Hurcombe, Mr and Mrs	Francis?	Mr	1s.	1939	32	press setter operator	Portland Street				
Ivamy, Mr Ernest MA	Ernest	Mr	3s.6d	1939	48	Principal of North Glos Technical College	The Woodlands Schoolhouse, The Park	1	Con	CofE St James	LONU committee and Vice President of LONU 1944, Rotary Club president 1939, speaking at Women's Conservative meeting 1936, churchwarden

											at St James 1933
Jackson Mr J	?John	Mr	2s.6d	1939	71		Union Street				well-known builder till sight went 1921 (news)
Jackson Mr JW Tugwell	John W	Mr	5s.	1939	79	grocer (widow)	38 Clarence Square	1			
Jackson Mrs	?Mary wife of John (above)	Mrs	3s.6d	1939	67	UDD	Union Street				
James Miss M K	Matilda K	Miss	1s.	1939	70	UDD (living with single ?sister)	Flat 39 Clarence Square				Ward Collector 1935
James Mrs		Mrs	1s.	x	x						
Jarvis Miss	?Doris	Miss	1s.	1939	24	librarian	Southampton House High Street			CofE All Saints	b.1911, m.1940 Slader; member of All Saints Church
Jaynes Mrs E C	Emma Camilla	Mrs	3s.6d	1939	78	incapacitate d (widow of steamship broker)	Churchdown				
Jeffery Mr W T	William Thomas	Mr	1s.	1939	56	schoolteach er (married)	222 Old Bath Road				Naunton Park Old Boys hon sec (Dye connection)
Jeffries Mr and Mrs C H	Florence	Mrs	2s.6d	1939	60	UDD	Cambray Place			Highbury	
Jeffries Mr and Mrs C H	Charles (L)	Mr	2s.6d	1939	65	Draper (Master)	Cambray place			Highbury	Secretary of Highbury Church. Superintenden t of Reddings Chapel
Jenkins Miss	?Janet Florence	Miss	1s.	1939	71	laundress retired	Croft Street			CofE Holy Trinity	3 sisters ran laundry business in Croft St ; J F d.1947
Jenkins Miss	Mary ?	Miss	1s.	1939	21	typist and invoice clerk	Naunton Lane				Married Arnold Cock in Cambray Baptist church in 1940 (father Frank church secretary)
Jenkins Miss C	Caroline Julia Georgina	Miss	£1	1939	60	private means	Savoy Hotel, Bayshill Road			CofE Christ Church	making donations to charities 1935 to 1947; d.1954
Jenkins Miss E M	Elsie Mary	Miss	1s.	1939	45	Teacher of French	Nothernwood, Pittville Circus Road		Lib	Baptist Salem	1933 president of Assistant Mistresses in Secondary Schools Association; French mistress at Pates, later head of Modern Languages; representing Pates

											Grammar school staff at Miss Miles funeral 1947; Cheltenham Liberal Association social event 1933
Jennings Rev Canon	Edward Linck	Canon	1s.	1939	78	clerk in holy orders retired	Wellington Square	2			
Johnson Mrs		Mrs	1s.	x							
Johnstone Rev Canon	Philip Marmaduke Cramer	Canon	5s.	1939	68	clerk in holy orders, married	All Saints Vicarage			CofE All Saints	vicar of All Saints; Education Committee; hospital chaplain; active attending LONU meetings from 1922; d.1946
Jones Mr and Mrs J H	Rotha	Mrs	3s.6d	1939	80	private means	Churchdown		Con	CofE	
Jones Mr and Mrs J H	John Henry	Mr	3s.6d	1939	82	solicitor public notary	Churchdown	3	Con	CofE	retired solicitor and JP, Churchdown PCC officer, True Blue Club (Conservative) d1941
Jones Mr H F	Horace Frances	Mr	5s.	1939	61	schoolteacher retired (married)	The Avenue Charlton Kings				Cheltenham College Science master
Jones Mr S L	Lionel Seymour?	Mr	1s.	x							
Jones Mrs D		Mrs	1s.	x							
Jones Mrs E H Watkin	Ellen Barton	Mrs	2s.6d	1939	67	widow (of Rev William Watkins Jones), private means	Audley, Christ Church Road	1			
Jones Mrs R M	(Rotha M already counted with Mr and Mrs J H)	Mrs	1s.	x							
Jordan Miss F A	Frances Annie	Miss	1s.	1939	85	living on own means	Hazledene Croft Avenue Charlton Kings				
Jordan Miss H M	Helen Margaret (daughter of Mary Holliday)	Miss	10s.	1939	56	health visitor	6 Tivoli Road				
Jordan Miss M D	Mary Dorothea (daughter of Mary Holliday)	Miss	5s.	1939	59	private means	6 Tivoli Road		Lib		Vice-chair Women's Liberal Association, LONU committee

Jordan Mrs H	Mary Holliday wife of Henry, coal merchant	Mrs	3s.6d	1939	80	private means	6 Tivoli Road				
Kearsey Miss		Miss	1s.	news	x						Senior member of staff of Dicks and Son retiring 1931 (Zebedee mentioned on staff); 1935 singing at Central Brotherhood event
Kelson Miss	Caroline	Miss	1s.6d.	1939	70	private means	Flat, Lisle House Clarence Square				Concerned with poor law guardians
Kemmis Rev J H	Jasper Harold	Rev	5s.	news	48	clerk in holy orders	Bath Road			CofE	Cheltenham College chaplain
Kendall Miss E	Ellen	Miss	1s.	1939	54	elementary school teacher	Pilford Road				Naunton Park Infants school 1936; representing LONU at Cheltenham service for Kings death; Zenana missionary support/worker 1930s
Kestell-Cornish Mr and Mrs J H	Mary Gertrude	Mrs	1s.	1921	65	home duties	Royal Parade				Attending Ladies College funeral
Kestell-Cornish Mr and Mrs J H	Hubert	Mr	1s.	1921	75	organising secretary of the Royal Navy Scripture Readers Society (in London 1921)	Royal Parade				LONU ward collector 1934; left town 1936
King Mr W L	Wilfred Lyle	Mr	5s.	1921	40	school teacher in 1921	Christowe (College House)				Cheltenham College house master, OTC officer 1932; ceased to serve 1933
Knott Mr and Mrs W S	Charlotte	Mrs	1s.	1939	65		The Bank, Cleeve Hill			CofE	
Knott Mr and Mrs W S	Walter S	Mr	1s.6d.	1939	66	(Rising Sun) hotel proprietor retired	The Bank, Cleeve Hill	1		CofE	St Peter's Cleeve Hill church members (church warden). Ward Collector 1935
Lamb Mr and Mrs R P	Lilian	Mrs	2s.6d	1939	56	UDD	Painswick Road			Methodist Wesleyan	Wesleyan Methodist circles, hosting tea at National Sunday School

											Conference meeting
Lamb Mr and Mrs R P	Reginald Percy	Mr	2s.6d	1939	56	surgical appliance dealer	Painswick Road			Methodist Wesleyan	Wesleyan Methodist circles, hosting tea at National Sunday School Conference meeting
Lamb Mrs E	Eliza	Mrs	2s.	1939	91	widow, private means,	Ewlyn Road			Methodist Bethesda	obit 1942: worked for BWTAU Temperance Movement and B and F Bible Society; son a Liberal MP
Lance Mrs G		Mrs	5s.						Lib	Highbury	Mrs Lance treasurer of Liberal Assoc Women's Section 1930; ??Highbury (Miss A Lance a member)
Lane Miss K	Kathleen	Miss	1s.	1939	56	retired schoolmistress	Montpellier Terrace			Unitarian Bayshill	ex-head teacher Naunton Park Infants School, appointed as head 1936 retired 1939 (Dye presented her), NUT member, Bayshill church member
Lane Mr	[Harry A]	Mr	1s.	1939	42	headteacher (married)	School House, Station Road, Churchdown				1920s Cirencester LONU hon treasurer and member of NUT and BL, moved to become head master of Churchdown School 1930
Lane Mr and Mrs W G	Annie Louisa	Mrs	1s.		64	UDD	Sunnyside Brockhampton			Baptist Salem	Brockhampton Baptist (Salem Baptist minister took funeral of Annie at Sevenhampton in 1941)
Lane Mr and Mrs W G	William George	Mr	2s.6d	1939	57	retired farmer	Sunnyside Brockhampton			Baptist Salem	Brockhampton Baptist (Salem Baptist minister took funeral of W G's wife Annie at Sevenhampton in 1941)

Lane Mrs Butler	Ann	Mrs	5s.	1921	76	widow	Sibbersfield, London Road, Charlton Kings			Methodist Wesleyan	widowed early - in the 1930s living with sister Marion Colmer, her companion Miss Sarah Jane Walker and a Mrs Norman (news and electoral rolls)
Lansdown Mrs	Gertrude	Mrs	1s.	1939	67	widow, UDD (with son)	Bath Road	1			Widow of a doctor; later joins UNO
Lawrence Mrs G	Emily (Mrs George husband)	Mrs	5s.	1921	84	widow (by 1921)	Greenmount Christ Church Road	4		CofE Christ Church	among group supporting mayor in civic function and YMCA 1930s; obit 1935; funeral at Christ Church (CofE); bequests including nursing and church charities
Lawson Dr F Winter	Frank Winter	Dr	3s.6d	1939	44	medical practitioner, married	Chatham House, Church Road, St Marks	1		Methodist St Mark	Czech Relief Fund contributor 1938, St Marks Brotherhood member and presiding at meetings 1920s, Methodist
Lawson Mr F	John Francis	Mr	3s.6d	1921	71	chief clerk, Gas Co Office (1921)	Columbia Place			Baptist Salem	Gas Green Girls Club committee; senior deacon Salem Baptist Church 1934-35 (60 years association), retired 1935 after 50 years' service with Gas Co - 3rd generation in his family
Leacy Mrs	Edith E	Mrs	1s.	1939	58	elementary school teacher, widow (already widow in 1921)	Morwenna Leckhampton Hill				Nauntun Park Infants School 38 years' service when retired in 1942 (worked with Miss Lane)
Lear Rev and Mrs	James Percy	Rev	3s.6d	1911	63	Baptist minister (retired, widower in 1939)	Old Bath Road			Baptist	
Lear Rev and Mrs	Edith	Mrs	1s.	1911	69		Old Bath Road			Baptist	
Lewis Miss A		Miss	5s.	news					Con		Swindon Road Boys School correspondent

											for school managers 1926-1930s (with Lipson and Ivamy); ?Conservative
Lewis Mr Alan	Alan	Mr	1s.	1939	54	municipal cashier [married]	16 Swindon Road				retired after 44 years 1943; chairman of swimming and water polo club
Lewis Mr and Mrs A C	Lily	Mrs	1s.	1939	39	waitress	15 Marle Hill Parade			Baptist Salem	Cheltenham branch of the English Speaking Union member
Lewis Mr and Mrs A C	Arthur Christopher	Mr	1s.	1939	49	incapacitated (in 1921 mercantile marine 1st mate, at sea)	15 Marle Hill Parade			Baptist Salem	Mr A C leader of senior dept Salem Sunday School 1936, secretary of the Cheltenham branch of the English Speaking Union
Lewis Mr D	David	Mr	10s.	1939	80	secretarial (former director of C & G Building Society (obit 1940), retired (army retired in 1921)	Redesdale Lawn, The Park		Lib	Methodist Wesleyan	LONU committee member 1921-26 at least; obit 1940: Free Church Council member 1920s, Wesleyan Methodist (Bethesda and Coombe Hill), JP and CC (on Education Committee), governor of Pates, Vice-Pres Shurdington cricket club 1934, Boys Orphanage committee; Liberal supporter
Lewis Mr H J	Henry J	Mr	5s.	1939	51	Building Society Secretary, St John's (married)	Overton Park Road			Methodist Bethesda	elected to board of C & G Building Society 1937; treasurer and vice chair hospital board 1934; County Officer St Johns Ambulance 1939
Lewis Mrs and Miss	Elizabeth Gertrude	Mrs	3s.6d	rolls			Greenhills Road Charlton Kings				

Lewis Mrs and Miss	[daughter] Ethel Winifred	Miss	1s.	rolls			Greenhills Road Charlton Kings				
Lewis Mrs D	Elizabeth Clarissa (wife of David)	Mrs	10s.	1939	80	UDD (daughter of a JP)	Redesdale Lawn, The Park	1	Lib	Methodist Bethesda	neighbours of Ivamy, Liberal supporter (d1937); Bethesda Methodist
Lewthwaite Miss J W		Miss	4s.	News						CofE St Philip & James	St Philip and James funeral. Supporter of LNU. 1934 ward collector for LONU. Represents LONU at Kings funeral 1936; Later committee member of UNA 1944, member of UNO
Lippett Miss	?Clara	Miss	1s.	news	53	ladies tailoring (in 1921)	Pretoria Terrace, Alstone Croft		Lab	Unitarian Bayhill	Bayshill Adult School hon. treasurer 1929; at Bayshill Unitarian garden party in Leckhampton 1930s (with Labour candidate present); Gloucester Co- op Society event at Town Hall
Lipson Mr D L	Daniel	Mr	£1	1939	49	Member of Parliament	117 Bath Road			Jewish	LONU chairman etc (school teacher) President of Chess Club
Lister Mr F	Frederick Henry	Miss	1s.	1939	50	headmaster Central School	75 Leckhampton Road				supporter of LONU 1934; head for 24 years
Littlemore Mrs	Alice Ann	Mrs	1s.	1939	46	UDD (wife of aircraft sheet metal worker)	Byron Road (St Marks)			Methodist St Mark	
Llewellyn Miss L	Matilda or Machelena (sisters)	Miss	1s.	1939	84	private means	The Old Mansion Prestbury		Con		Prestbury Conservative and Unionist Assoc members (1930s)
Lloyd-Baker, Lt Col.	Arthur B	Lt Col.	£2	1939	52	Housemaste r, Cheltenham College - Retired	Bath Road				1931 - vice Chair of Education Committee
Locke Mrs D	Freda wife of Dennis	Mrs	1s.	1939	27	wife of a stonemason (b1908 so assume she is same age)	Brockhampton				Sevenhampton WI

Lockie Mrs	Violet Lilian Lockey	Mrs	5s.	1939	21	UDD	Whitfield, Charlton Kings				Living with Lionel Northcroft (who she married in 1939) - managing director of engineering firm Spirax making steam fittings, later chairman of Rotary Club
Long Mr W Turner	William Turner	Mr	2s.6d	1939	69	retired clerk in holy orders, married	Bibury Cottage [off Priory Place]				LONU committee 1926
Longhurst Rev Canon	William Henry Robert	Canon	10s.	1921	96	Retired Canon (Worcester)	Bayshill Mansion			CofE St Paul	
Lott Mr J H	John Henry	Mr	1s.	1939	64	gardener own account (1921 confectioner , widower)	144 Gloucester Road			Methodist	d.1945, long connected with Methodist church, Cheltenham Brotherhood, National Deposit Friendly Society (local committee)
Lovell Mrs	Alice Catherine	Mrs	2s.6d	1921	74	private means (widow of waterproofer and rubber merchant)	Imperial Square		Lib	Highbury	Strong Liberal family (Vice-Pres), Highbury Church, Women's Temperance Association
Luke Miss	Myra	Miss	1s.	1939	57	private means	4 Glebe Road, Prestbury				Nursing Association hon. Sec.; Prestbury WI hon. treasurer
Lusty Mr C R	Cyril R	Mr	5s.	1939	37	bank accountant (Montpellier branch), married	Old Bath Road			Methodist Bethesda	1934 letter on peace;1939 letter against conscription; 1940s chairman of Cheltenham branch of 'Common Wealth' Party; Cheltenham Scouts 1945 speaking to Cheltenham Peace Council 1930s Bethesda Methodist organist, secretary of Bible Society
Maddon Mr J	Maddox? [1932 list]	Mr	1s.	x	x						
Major Mr H	Herbert Richard	Major	1s.	news	65	widower, cashier for Dale Forty	Alstone Ave			Baptist	Baptist, Sunday School Union,

						and Co (1921)					Temperance; 50 years as a local preacher 1948
Mann Mr and Mrs Edgar	Winifred	Mrs	2s.6d	1939	40	UDD	Alstone Spa [Mill Brook area]			Methodist Wesleyan	Mrs E daughter of George Ballinger; Royal Well Wesleyan Methodist members
Mann Mr and Mrs Edgar	Edgar	Mr	2s.6d	1939	47	watch and jewellery dealer	Alstone Spa [Mill Brook area]			Methodist Wesleyan	Royal Well Wesleyan Methodist members; YMCA committee; LONU hon finance sec 1935
Mann Mrs Alfred	Emily	Mrs	1s.	1939	70	widow, private means	Tivoli Road		Con	Methodist	Conservative, Royal Well Methodist Church member (with late husband Alfred, alderman d1929); Represents LONU at Kings funeral 1936
Marquis Mr J	James	Mr	5s.	1939	83	bank official retired, widowed	2 Lyefield Villas Charlton Kings				living with daughter and a Miss Evans, both music teachers
Marsden Mr R S	Ronald Samuel	Mr	5s.	news	33	school master	College Road			CofE	son of a cleric (vicar of Holy Trinity); obit 1935 dying young; head of scout troop, assistant housemaster at Cheltenham College
Marshall Miss G	Grace Elizabeth, sister of Ida	Miss	2s.6d	1939	63	private means	Painswick Road		Con		hon sec of Cheltenham United Girls Clubs 1930s; div secretary of Cheltenham Women's Conservative and Unionist Assoc
Marshall Miss Ida	Ida, sister of	Miss	2s.6d	1939	58	private means	Painswick House, Painswick Road			CofE St Matthew	1930s member of National Council of Women; St Matthews Church; Superintenden t of Sunday School

Marshall Mrs C	Catherine	Mrs	2s.6d	1939	63	widow, independent means [of Charles Marshall, manager of Marshalls]	Holmbury, Thorncliffe Drive, Lansdown			CofE St John	School of Art; 1929 beaten at Central Ward election of town councillor; president National Council of Women 1926, 1934; 1927 Vice Pres of Parents Association of Pates Grammar; 1931, 1932 member of Education Committee; 1939 chair of Baldwin's Refugee Fund for Children; member of St Johns church
Martin Miss A	Annie	Miss	1s.	1921	67	Farming (employer)	Westmancote, Tewkesbury				daughter of a farmer - no obvious links to Miss B
Martin Miss B		Miss	1s.	x	x						
Martin Mrs CM		Mrs	1s.	news			Prestbury		Con		Prestbury Conservatives women's section 1930s (husband C M is chairman)
Martyn Mr and Mrs	Ada	Mrs	1s.	1939	63	UDD	Herne Road, Charlton Kings		Con	CofE Holy Apostles	chairing Inner Wheel (women's rotary); Conservative, Holy Apostles
Martyn Mr and Mrs	?Alfred William	Mr	1s.	1939	65	company director [Dowty Equipment]	Herne Road, Charlton Kings		Con	CofE Holy Apostles	Son of late H. H. Martyn; Conservative supporter 1937; celebrated golden wedding 1940s; obit. d1947; Holy Apostles members; Charlton Kings UDC, County Councillor, Rotary Club president
Mason Miss D J	?Delia	Miss	1s.	1921	43		?Winchcombe				
Mason Mr R W	Ronald William	Mr	1s.	1939	29	clerk in holy orders	St Pauls Road/Clarence Square			CofE St Paul	1930s and 1940s St Paul's Church curate 'Rev R W Mason' (m 1939 Constance Skeet)

Mather Mrs	Ethel	Mrs	1s.	1939	71	widow, private means (with daughter)	Malvern Road	1		CofE Christ Church	Her late husband connected with Dean Close School and St Pauls Training College; she was indefatigable charity worker; Christ Church member and on PCC; lost several sons in WWI; obit. 1942
Maunder Miss	?Emmeline Winifred	Miss	1s.	1921	71	single, lodger, home duties	2 Bays Hill Parade				incapacitated by 1939 and in 4 College Road
May Mrs	Fanny (wife of Francis)	Mrs	1s.	1939	65	widow	1 St Georges Drive		Con		husband Frank May d 1932 obit: market gardener, Tewkesbury Road (Swindon Village); Conservative? Wife Fanny
Mayhew Mrs	Theodora (wife of Arthur	Mrs	2s.6d	1921	39	UDD, husband a mining engineer	The Granleys, St Marks	3	Con		Conservative Association member (hosted party)
McArthur Mrs K	Maria K (Katherine)	Mrs	£1	1939	68	widow, private means	Hewletts Road			CofE All Saints	d1941 obit: widow of Charles former vicar of St Stephens; member of All Saints Church; attends Mrs Briggs funeral
McDonald Miss	?Emily Florence	Miss	2s.	news	52	school teacher	St Paul's Street North			CofE	Parish Church School teacher, leaving 1935 (d1939)
Mendel Mr W	Walter	Mr	1s.	news		?married to Kathleen Caroline Charlotte (rolls)	Hanover House, Montpellier Walk				Applying for naturalization 1934 (German)
Mercer Mr and Mrs J W	Harriett Elizabeth	Mrs	10s.	news	50	UDD	Sarnway, Charlton Park Gate				Mrs -president of League of Pity
Mercer Mr and Mrs J W	John William	Mr	10s.	news	65	retired school master	Sarnway, Charlton Park Gate				Youth Hostels Assoc - JWM sec of North Cotswold branch; JWM retires as head of Military side of Cheltenham College, there since 1913 and had been in charge of OTC
Messenger Mr H	Henry Thomas	Mr	1s.	1939	55	district secretary of National	All Saints Terrace			Methodist Wesleyan	Wesleyan Methodist

						Deposit Friendly Society, married					
Methold Miss N	Norah	Miss	1s.	1921	67	single, no occupation (1921)	Ivy Cottage, Church Street, Charlton Kings				d1936 daughter of Edward Vincent Methold, barrister
Miles A N	Anita Newton	Miss	£1	1939	61	teacher retired	Wellington Square				MA, head of Pates Girls School d1947; 1933 LONU Vice Pres; UNA
Miller Miss I	??Rachel	Miss	1s.	1939	27	single, daughter of John Miller vicar at Sevenhampton	Sevenhampton vicarage			Methodist Bethesda	Miss Miller' attends funeral of Mrs David Lewis at Bethesda Methodists 1937
Mitchell Miss L	?	Miss	2s.	news			?Leckhampton Road		Lib		Liberal, d1935; 'of Leckhampton Road 1891 and an assistant at Mr Playle's shop in the Promenade' news
Monico Mrs	Mary wife of Harold	Mrs	1s.	1939	43	wife of drapery manager	Old Bath Road			Baptist Salem	Salem Baptist member, choir secretary; LONU ward collector 1934
Moore Miss Marjorie	Marjorie [sister of Sybil and Winifred]	Miss	1s.	1939	46	UDD	6 Park Place	1			daughter of retired Indian Army
Moore the Misses	Winifred [sisters of Marjorie]	Miss	5s.	1939	56	UDD	6 Park Place			Highbury	daughters of retired major general (Bombay); Highbury Church members
Moore the Misses	Sybil [sisters of Marjorie]	Miss	5s.	1939	59	UDD	6 Park Place	1		Highbury	daughters of retired major general (Bombay); Highbury Church members
Morris Rev Palmer	Rev William	Rev	1s.	1921	55	Methodist Minister, married	Clarence Square			Methodist	of St George's Street Church; superintendent of Methodist Circuit 1933-36; Sunday School Union; pacifist - no more war movement; left Cheltenham 1936
Moss Misses	Helen	Miss	2s.6d	1939	66	private means	Dumfries House, Royal Parade, Bayshill Road				born in India; Cheltenham Literary Society

											committee member (Helen) with D Lipson etc; Miss H on teaching staff of Pates 1936
Moss Misses	Jesse	Miss	2s.6d	1939	71	private means	Dumfries House, Royal Parade, Bayshill Road				born in India
Moucheron Mr	Fernand S	Mr	1s.	1921	28	traveller hand made lace (1921); aircraft co. progress clerk, married (1939)	Portland Parade (with the Tarlings 1921 and 1939)			Unitarian Bayshill	Belgian; Bayshill Unitarian Church member and envelope secretary (committee)
Mountford Miss	Elsie Grace	Miss	£1	1939	37	school teacher	Astell House Overton Park Road (Ladies College)				Cheltenham Ladies College staff (talking about slavery and peace at a local WI 1930s); emigrated to NZ in 1951
Murciani Mdle	Berthe Eugenie Apolline Julia	Miss	1s.	news	74	teacher of French at Ladies College from 1896	Orrisdale Terrace, College Road			Catholic	d1938 obit: French native; retired 1918; funeral at St Gregory's
Musgrove Mrs	Rose Elizabeth [widow of William retired sergt major RE]	Mrs	2s.6d	1921	73	tobacconist shopkeeper	Suffolk Parade		Con	CofE St James	Obit d1935; St James Church worker; Girls Friendly Society, Mothers Union; Conservative
Narramore Mrs and Miss	Minnie	Mrs	1s.	1939	62	widow UDD	31 Ewlyn Road			CofE Emmanuel	Emmanuel parish; Cheltenham Branch of Dickens Society; Mrs N worked at Dicks and Son furniture department in 1920s;
Narramore Mrs and Miss	Winifred	Miss	1s.	1939	33	shorthand typist with printers and publishers [Burrows]	31 Ewlyn Road			CofE Emmanuel	Miss N a member Business and Professional Women's Club
Neale Rev Edgar	Edgar	Rev	1s.	news	73	clerk in holy orders, bachelor	The Vicarage, Charlton Kings	1		CofE St Mary Charlton Kings	Obit: 1937 vicar of Charlton Kings; 'High Churchman'
Newton Mrs	Alice	Mrs	5s.	1939	92	UDD widow	Broadlands The Park	3		CofE	Obit: 1941 widow of the late Major Newton, Indian Medical Service; Board of Management of Boys

											Orphanage; donation to building Emmanuel Church [Anglican]
Norman Mrs	Susannah	Mrs	1s.	1939	72	married UDD (husband retired, in insurance)	Pittville Lawn				Obit: 1940 widow of George; Temperance movement; National Council of Women
Organ Mr W	?Walter	Mr	5s.	1939	37	railway signalman retired	Leckhampton Road				
Osborne Mr N G	Neville Goldsmith	Mr	5s.	1939	24	married, assistant secondary school master	The Laurels, Pilford Ave, Leckhampton			Methodist	President of Gloucestershire Anglo-German Society (German Speaking Club founded 1933 Ivamy also involved); German master at Grammar School; married in 1937; 1942 YMCA Brains Trust; Grammar School Army Cadet Corps; talking to Youth Group of LONU at Bethesda Methodist on Norman Angell's book 1937
Owen Miss	Annie Amy Myfanwy	Miss	£1	news	46	Secondary school mistress	1 York Terrace			CofE	LONU committee 1926; Senior History Tutor at Ladies College 1922-1949 (d1974); daughter of a bishop
Paddick Mr E	Edward	Mr	3s.6d	1939	66	civil servant [min of labour], married	Carfrae, Battledown Approach			Highbury	Highbury Congregational Church member, deacon, Toc H
Paddick Mrs L	Lilie (wife of Edward)	Mrs	1s.	1939	64	UDD	Carfrae, Battledown Approach			Highbury	Highbury Congregational Church member, Toc H (women's section)
Palmer Misses	Marjorie Doreen	Miss	1s.	1939	30	assistant school mistress (The Hall	Westborough, Western Road				

						boarding school, Montpellier), unmarried					
Palmer Misses	Phyllis Margaret	Miss	1s.	1939	34	assistant school mistress (The Hall boarding school, Montpellier), unmarried	Westborough, Western Road				no news
Palmer Mrs	Olive M (wife of Aubrey M)	Mrs	5s.	1939	48	UDD	Bath Road				Hon Sec Inner Wheel (women's rotary) -?wife of A M Palmer (Shirer and Haddon manager, links with Tech College for textile research, and Chamber of Commerce, Rotarian, left to London) either this Mrs Palmer or one above
Palmer Mrs	?	Mrs	1s.			?	Cirencester Road				
Palser Mr and Mrs	Laura	Mrs	1s.	1939	54	housewife	Bramhall, Kensington Ave (Lansdown)			CofE St Matthew	St Matthews Church Council (Mrs P elected onto Council) 1938; Victoria Home Nurses charity (Mrs)
Palser Mr and Mrs	William	Mr	1s.	1939	54	headmaster elementary school	Bramhall, Kensington Ave (Lansdown)			CofE St Matthew	Dickens Fellowship (founder in 1912); ; St Marks School Alstone then after reorganisation, by 1936 head of Dunalley Street School (35 years retired 1942); Historical Association member; hon sec CEMS (Missionary Society);
Parker Mr and Mrs	Ethelreda	Mrs	2s.6d	1939	56	UDD	Oakley, Battledown			CofE St John	St Matthews Church Council member (Mrs)
Parker Mr and Mrs	Ernest	Mr	2s.6d	1939	61	bank clerk retired	Oakley, Battledown			CofE St John	St Johns Church members (both)
Parker		Mrs	1s.	x							

Mrs											
Parkin Mr and Mrs	Elizabeth	Mrs	1s.	1939	62	UDD	Fernley, Copt Elm Road, Charlton Kings			CofE Holy Apostles	Holy Apostles
Parkin Mr and Mrs	Thomas	Mr	1s.	1939	62	wood carver	Fernley, Copt Elm Road, Charlton Kings			CofE Holy Apostles	Employed at Boulton and Sons 35 Years; Holy Apostles church (obit 1941);
Parkyn Mrs E	Ethel Florence	Mrs	3s.6d	1939	56	independent means, widow	36 Priory Street			Highbury	Highbury Congregational Church including missionary support.
Parry Miss Dorothy Eileen	Dorothy	Miss	1s.	1921	20	UDD, 1935 library assistant sister of E J	[Leckhampton]			Baptist Salem	Salem Baptist Church married 1935 William Lewis Rowe and moved from Cheltenham; younger daughter of F G Parry
Parry Miss E J	Elizabeth (Betty) Joan - see Staddon	Miss	1s.	news	29	library assistant sister of Dorothy; Rotunda Terrace				Unitarian Bayshill	Living with Barbara Thomas
Parry Miss M F	Mary Francis	Miss	5s.	1939	29	private means (living with widowed mother and another single woman)	10 Hatherley Court Road	1			Zenana Mission hon sec 1949
Parry Mrs Mary	Mary H	Mrs	1s.	1939	79	(married in roll 1928, widow, incapacitated by 1939)	Pittville Circus				?widowed in 1938
Paterson Mr G M	Graeme Montague	Mr	£1.1s.	1921	47	school master [Cheltenham College house master]	Paragon Terrace, Bath road		Lib		SCF; English Association Cheltenham branch with Barbara Thomas; LONU speaker and committee to 1944; WEA; Liberal (supports Lipson in 1935); in Shrewsbury by 1939
Pates Mr W T	William Thomas	Mr	1s.	1939	82	builder, [employer of building firm] (d1938)	Tudor House, Hewlett Road		Con	CofE	bellringer at Cheltenham parish church, founded building and sanitary engineering firm, Conservative

											Association member
Paul Miss	Amy	Miss	10s.	1939	77	single, private means	Hillside, Gadshill Road, Charlton Kings	1			
Peach Mrs	Evelyn Violet	Mrs	5s.	1939	58	married, husband Charles William vicar of Up Hatherley	The Vicarage, Up Hatherley	2		CofE	
Pearce Mr G B	Gerald B	Mr	1s.	1939	53	Chief assistant borough treasurers dept, married	Tennyson Road St Mark's				retired 1940
Pearce Mrs and Miss	?Catherine and Kathleen M	Miss	1s.	1939	32	cook	Fairfield Ave				no news
Pearce Mrs and Miss	?Catherine and Kathleen M	Miss	1s.	1939	54	UDD	Fairfield Ave				no news
Peebles Mrs W S M	Winifred	Mrs	£2.2s.	1939	53	widow, UDD	Woodlands The Park	2			Obit: 1937 for husband Brig General Evelyn Peebles, OB and member of Cheltenham College Council, and Ladies College Council; WW1 veteran retired 1919; British Legion
Peel Miss	Ruth	Miss	1s.	1939	56	single, UDD (living with sister)	The Abbots, All Saints Road			CofE All Saints	All Saints Church member; attended Briggs funeral
Peel Rev WD	Rev Herbert Daniel	Rev	1s.	1939	57	clerk in holy orders, married	Bath Road			CofE Emmanuel	Obit: 1941 vicar of Emmanuel (built it up from start), created Women's Guild there,
Penberthy Mrs	Florence	Mrs	2s.6d	1939	79	widow, private means (living with ?daughter)	11 Lansdown Parade	2			Widowed since before 1911 (late husband John a cocoa manufacturer)
Percival Mr and Mrs	Blanche Gwendoline	Mrs	1s.	1939	38	billeting	The Orchard, The Park			CofE St James	Mrs P awarded MBE for wartime billeting work; social welfare interest; National Council of Women branch ; both St James Church
Percival Mr and Mrs	Victor William	Mr	1s.	1939	37	dental surgeon, billeting (1939 both	The Orchard, The Park	1		CofE St James	Obit: 1950, prominent dentist and freemason, OB

						involved in war)					Cheltenham College, WW1 veteran;
Pettinger Mrs	Dorothy Maud	Mrs	1s.	1939	53	UDD, married to poultry farmer [who was an invalid in 1939]	Dunstan Lodge, Churchdown		Con	CofE	involved in work of parish at Churchdown; support for Victoria Home (District Nursing Association); Zenana Mission exhibition; women's Conservative Association member; YMCA supporter
Phillips Mr J	?James Gastrell	Mr	1s.	1939	71	architect retired, married	Imperial Square				
Philpot Mr F H	Frederick H	Mr	2s.6d	1939	40	school master	Linton House, Thirlestaine Road (College)				Assistant master Cheltenham College
Phipps Mr W G	Walter Glover	Mr	5s.	1921	50	book keeper at Thomas Plant Ltd, unmarried	Marston, Langdon Road				Living with elderly aunt; member/treasurer of Esperanto Society, d1945
Pike Miss	?Minnie	Miss	1s.	1939	65	paid cook (to the Briggs after many years service 1935)	The Lawn, Park Place				Faithful servant and friend of Mr and Mrs Briggs (death 1939)
Pillinger Mr and Mrs G	Guy Alan	Mr	1s.	1939	37	civil servant [inspector of ministry of health]	Pilley Lane			Methodist	1916 enlisted then discharged on medical grounds in WW1; 1917 entered civil service (customs and excise); Officer in Cheltenham Methodist Circuit and its secretary for education; holding service at various Methodist churches; Royal Well steward; at Mrs Dye's funeral 1943; left for Bristol in 1937
Pillinger Mr and Mrs G	Violet Elizabeth	Mrs	1s.	1939	36	UDD					
Playle Mrs J	Mary Emma	Mrs	£2.2s.	1921	96	widow by 1934	Southville St George's Road	1	Lib		widow of John Playle, retired draper (obit)

											she d1936 both Liberals
Pollard Mrs	Mary Campbell	Mrs	5s.	1939	52	widow, UDD	Garrondene, St George's Road		Con		Zenana Mission supporter; Lansdown Ward Conservative; wife of Dr John M W Pollard, anaesthetist d1937
Potter Brig Gen	Herbert C	Gen	2s.6d	1939	60	retired brig gen, married	Exning Lawn, Christchurch Road		Con	CofE	Christchurch member; Lantern talk on India 1932 (widely travelled in India); board of Girls Orphanage; Zenana Mission treasurer; President of Cheltenham Scouts; also St James Church Lads Brigade (later led Army Cadets 1944); Lansdown Ward Conservative member, West Ward Vice Chairman; Pedestrian Association member; 1936 talking at LONU meeting; 1944 committee member of LONU, later supporting UNO; Historical Association member
Powis Mr Frank	Frank	Mr	2s.6d	news	61	fishmonger	Old Bath Road		Con	Baptist Pilley	Pilley Baptist Church (obit 1937); Conservative supporter
Pratt Mr H B	Herbert Burford	Mr	3s.6d	1939	42	private means, [married]	Westmancote (Bredon)				British Union Anti- Vivisection Cheltenham branch acting president 1930s; letter on rearmament 1933; lecture to Theosophical Society 1927; anti- vaccination

											views; jubilee committee hon sec for Westmancote 1935;
Pratt Mrs E G	Elizabeth Georgina	Mrs	1s.	1939	69	widow, private means	Ellenborough House				retiring chair Zenana Mission 1934; chair British Sailors Charity (with Mrs Lipson) 1941
Preston Lady		Lady	£1.1s.	news	58		Tetbury		Con	CofE	Conservative, wife of MP
Preston Sir Walter MP	Walter	Sir	£1.1s.	news	60	[engineer, politician], married	Tetbury		Con	CofE	MP for Cheltenham 1928-1937 (resigned), Conservative, CLNU committee member; LONU vice-president
Prichard Miss L	Leonora	Miss	1s.	1921	74	[spinster, private means]	Lansdown Crescent			CofE	d1943 Obit: daughter of Rev Constantine Prichard, Fellow of Balliol
Priestley Mr T C	Clement Thory	Mr	5s.	1939	31	school teacher	Southwood, Lypiatt Road (College)				Cheltenham College OTC Lieutenant
Pritchard Mrs F	Ethel Maud	Mrs	1s.	1939	37	UDD, wife of Frederick Pritchard, newsagent	Syreford, Andoversford			Baptist	married at Salem Chapel in Andoversford
Probert Miss	Frances Elsie Marshall	Miss	5s.	1921	44	spinster [living with sister and brother in law]	Bath Road			CofE All Saints	Red Cross volunteer WW1; SPG supporter; All Saints Church member; LONU ward collector 1934, Represents LONU at Kings funeral 1936; d1946
Pruen Dr and Mrs	Septimus Tristram, Evelyn Mary	Mrs	2s.6d	1921	54	UDD	Malvern Road			CofE Christ Church	LONU committee (1926); a daughter of Rear Admiral Arbuthnot d.1913
Pruen Dr and Mrs	Septimus Tristram	Dr	2s.6d	1921	75	surgeon	Malvern Road			CofE Christ Church	LONU committee (1926), Dean Close School, trustee of St Peter's, medical officer of workhouse, Missionary Society, member and warden of Christ Church,

											YMCA chairman, obit 1937
Pulsford Mr	Albert Edward	Mr	1s.	1939	58	Removal contractor, married	Pittville Hotel	1		Baptist Salem	wife's funeral at Salem Chapel
Purnell Mr and Mrs A F	Gladys	Mrs	1s.	1939	32	UDD	Great Western Terrace				
Purnell Mr and Mrs A F	Arthur F	Mr	3s.6d	1939	37	Tax Officer (IR) higher grade	Great Western Terrace				
Radburn Mr T H	?Frank H (no T H anywhere)	Mr	1s.	1911	73	grocer and PO, St Paul's, married	St Paul's Post Office			Methodist Wesleyan	Obit: 1935 Wesleyan church lay preacher
Raimondi Miss	Ethel	Miss	1s.	1939	67	single, independent means	27 St Georges Road				teacher of music at Ladies College to 1928; living with Overend Rose; donor to Victoria Home (Nursing charity)
Ransford Miss EM	Margaret	Miss	2s.6d	news	81	[hospital matron, retired]	Kilchberg villas St Lukes Road			CofE St Luke	d1935, one of 4 sisters who were hospital matrons, funeral at St Lukes
Ransford Miss F	Florence	Miss	2s.	1939	77	hospital matron retired	85 Bath Road			CofE St Luke	d1941 one of 4 sisters who were hospital matrons, Funeral at St Lukes
Reason Miss A		Miss	1s.	news						Prestbyt St Andrew	St Andrews Presbyterian church member
Reason Mr GH	Charles Henry (no G H anywhere)	Mr	2s.6d	1921	66	motor garage proprietor, married	Brooklyn Road		Lib	Prestbyt St Andrew	Obit 1938: organist Salem Baptist church, clerk of the deacons at St Andrews, committee member of West Ward Liberals
Rhodes Mrs Fairfax	Mary Louisa	Mrs	£2.2s.	1939	85	widow private means	Alstone Lodge Queens Road	2			Supports YMCA and other good causes; president of hospital board 1939; Pedestrian Association; daughters the Misses Snowdon; (before 1934 at Brockhampton Park (husband Colonel d 1934, she d1941)

Rigg Miss	Gladys Mary	Miss	1s.	1921	47	school teacher	Kipling Road				Gloucester Road Girls Central School 1940s
Riley Miss	[Emma]	Miss	3s.6d	news	85	private means	Imperial Square			Methodist Wesleyan	obit 1938 staunch member of the Wesley Church (Methodist)
Ringer Mrs F A	Frederica Adela	Mrs	2s.	1939	84	widow [of a Bengal surgeon], private means in 1921	22 Lansdown Terrace, Malvern Road			CofE Leckhampton	d.1940, funeral at St Peters Leckhampton, VAD nurse, cousin died of shellshock after WW1, partly educated in Hanover, Germany, travelled around Europe, YMCA medal for war work, very active socially in Cheltenham - music, national lifeboat charity, animal welfare charities, prisoners of war, etc 'life of splendid social work'
Rivington Dr Eveleen	Eveleen Blanche	Dr *	3s.6d	1939	47	medical practitioner, single	Milverton, Church St, Charlton Kings			Baptist Charlton Kings	LONU membership committee 1930; represents LONU at Kings funeral 1936; Charlton Kings Baptist (and speaker); Charlton Kings Sisterhood vice-president; public vaccinator for Board of Guardians
Roberts Miss EA	Emily Alice (sister living with Katherine May)	Miss	3s.6d	news	64	no occupation given in 1911 [private means?]	4 Oxford Parade				Parish Church Infants School correspondent
Roberts Miss KM	Katherine May (sister living with Emily Alice)	Miss	2s.6d	news	72	artist bookillustrator (in 1911)	4 Keynsham Parade on 1920 roll				Local artist, chairman of Public Library Lectures [club], St Mary's Hall - talk on politics 1942
Roberts Miss SE		Miss	1s.	x							

Roberts Mr and Mrs SE	Madeline A	Mrs	1s.	1939	43	running apartment house	Spa Buildings, Montpellier			Methodist Bethesda	married 1919, she was a music teacher then; Mrs regularly speaking at Bethesda Brotherhood and Sisterhood; methodist missionary fundraising
Roberts Mr and Mrs SE	Sidney Edward	Mr	1s.	1939	38	machine room overseer (printers)	Spa Buildings, Montpellier			Methodist Bethesda	Typographical Association member;
Robinson Miss EM	Ellen Margaret	Miss	2s.6d	news	63	?private means	Costello, Eldorado Crescent	2		CofE Christ Church	Christ Church funeral 1937
Robinson Miss F	Florence	Miss	3s.6d	1939	69	private means	Rhodeville Shurdington Road			CofE St Philip & James	Sister of Mrs O M Williams; St Philip and James - memorial to her parents Rowland and Emma Robinson [Church of England]; donation to Czechoslovakia Relief Fund she died 1946
Robinson Mr JC	Joseph Charles	Mr	2s.	1939	66	master bread maker and grocer, married	Bakery Stores, High Street, Prestbury			Baptist	Obit: 1949 Nonconformists ?Baptist - Walker Memorial Church (in Whaddon Road), officer on Prestbury Parish Council, Cheltenham RDC and Board of Guardians
Robinson Mr R	?Robert Ernest	Mr	1s.	1939	29	aircraft erector	Ham House, Horn Road, Charlton Kings			CofE	Charlton Kings Parochial Church Council member; Salem Baptist connection - attended funeral of Lear
Robson Miss DM	Dorothy Margaret	Miss	1s.	1921	27	[elementary school teacher - 1939 in Newbury Berkshire]	Coronation Road Prestbury		Lab	Unitarian Bayshill	Bayshill Unitarian Church member with Barbara Thomas; ?Labour - entered bulb comp organised by women's section at Highbury;

											sister of John Alan Robson
Robson Mr and Mrs J Alan	Elsie W	Mrs	1s.	1939	27	UDD	Brockworth Lodge, New Barn Lane, Prestbury			Methodist Wesleyan	wife a Wesley Guild member too, Prestbury Brownies Brown Owl
Robson Mr and Mrs J Alan	John Alan	Mr	1s.	1939	29	solicitor (and ARP)	Brockworth Lodge, New Barn Lane, Prestbury			Methodist Wesleyan	Wesley Methodist Guild secretary, clerk to Prestbury Parish Council, brother of Dorothy Margaret Robson;
Rogers Miss	?Catherine A F (living with the Emlyns 1939)	Miss	1s.	1939	47	incapacitated	131 Leckhampton Rd			Prestbyt St Andrew	St Andrews Presbyterian church member; sister in law of Dr Emlyn
Rootes Miss	Anne Rudge	Miss	5s.	news	81	private means (1881 living with widowed mother 'daily teacher')	Glenfall Terrace, All Saints Road				Attending funeral All Saints; d1936 after car knocked her down
Rose Miss CS	Caroline Salmon	Miss	1s.	1939	54	school teacher retired	Lansdown Crescent flat			CofE	parents head and assistant teachers and she was a pupil teacher at Sherborne CofE school 1901
Rose Dr Overend	Overend George	Dr	1s.	1939	79	retired physician retired (widowed in 1936)	27 St Georges Road			CofE St Mary Chelt	Obit: 1941 Cheltenham College OB, medical degree in San Francisco, South Sea island sugar planter; funeral at St Mary's
Rose Mrs Overend	Louise/Lucy, wife of Dr Overend Rose	Mrs	1s.	1921	55	teacher of music at Pate's Grammar School (1921)	St Georges Road				d1936 committed suicide after a history of mental illness - known for charity work
Roseveare Mrs RVH	Frances Alice (wife of Richard Victor Harley)	Mrs	10s.	1939	28	wife of head of Cheltenham College	College House				nee Fraser, Canadian roots; married head of Cheltenham College; supporter of Children's Union and animal welfare and SPG; helped found

											Child Guidance Clinic in Cheltenham; sister of Cheltenham Town Clerk
Rossingnol Mlle	Jeanne Blanche Claire ROSSIGNOL	Mlle	1s.	1911	63	teacher of French (1911), foreign national	Charlton Kings			Highbury	1933 Cheltenham Free Church Women's Council member at meeting in Highbury, m. Bethall in 1937
Rowbotham Miss JP	Edith Mary, JP	Miss	3s.6d	1921	71	private means	Kings Road	1		Highbury	LONU committee member; Highbury Congregational Sunday School teacher and superintendent for 50 years; Oxford Street Sisterhood; on Board of Guardians; Free Church Women's Council and JP d1950
Roy Mr T Maitland	Thomas Maitland	Mr	5s.	news	63	general produce merchant and employer retired, married (wife d1936)	Lomond, Evesham Road			Unitarian Bayshill	speaking out against Mosely (letter to news); Cripples Aid Assoc hon treasurer; with Barbara Thomas at Unitarian Assembly in London; preaching at Bayshill; left Cheltenham in 1936
Sadler Mrs	Hilda Charlotte	Mrs	1s.	1939	59	householder , widow (of furniture dealer)	129 The Promenade			Baptist Salem	Salem Baptist Church member; president of Charlton Kings Sisterhood (Baptist); supporting Grove Street Mission; collector for LONU 1934
Sallis Mr J Attwood		Mr	1s.				Charlton Kings				attending funeral 1943
Sansom Miss BM	Beatrice Mary	Miss	1s.	1939	36	Clerk in publishing office	Swindon Road				WW2 billeting office and land army
Saunders Mr J		Mr	1s.	news			Plymouth			Baptist	?Baptist minister

Schuster Miss	Dorothea	Miss	1s.	1939	50	University coaching (teacher in 1921)	Heysham House, Park Place			CofE St Mary Chelt	Father a wealthy merchant d1928; English Folk Dancing Society hon sec 1927; St Mary's parish church Sunday School teacher 1937; hon treasurer Historical Association (1947)
Scott Misses	Sylvia [neice and aunt??]	Miss	10s.	1939	38	chartered masseuse	Bath Road				Obit: 1942 - Sylvia 11 years working at Children's Hospital
Scott Misses	Annie Brown Essen [neice and aunt??]	Miss	10s.	1939	75	companion retired	Bath Road				
Sears Ven. Archdeacon	Frederick William	Rev	10s.	1939	65	Archdeacon of Cheltenham and canon of cathedral	Cathedral Gardens, Gloucester	2		CofE	Archdeacon of Cheltenham (Church of England), 1937 peace service with LONU, platform party at LONU meeting 1934,
Selley Mr CJ	Charles John	Mr	1s.	1939	47	market gardener and poultry farmer, partly incapacitated, married	Shurdington Road			Methodist Bethesda	Organist at Bethesda Methodist - became Quaker 1948, d1950
Selley Mr FC	Frederick Cavendish	Mr	2s.6d	1939	53	electrical engineer, traveller and salesman, married	Oakley Lodge, Shurdington Road			Methodist Bethesda	Bethesda Church trustees treasurer, chairman Overseas Missionary , - Methodist
Seton Mrs	Emily G	Mrs	1s.	1939	76	widow [of Rev Andrew Ramsey Wilmot Seton]	27 Montpellier Terrace			CofE	Church of England
Sharp Mr WR	Reginald W	Mr	5s.	1939	69	General farmer, widowed	Coxhorne, London Road	2			
Sheldon the Rev LGM	Leonard Gordon Melville	Rev	£1.1s.	news	43	clergyman, married	The Rectory (Douro Road, Lansdown)			CofE	1917-20 temporary chaplain of the forces; ornithologist; rector of parish of Cheltenham; 1926-36 President of LONU; left town in 1936

Shenton Mrs	Mary	Mrs	5s.	news	76	widow	Home Villa, Grosvenor Place	2		CofE St Mary Chelt	d1936 obit: funeral at parish church, carrying on husband's printing/bill posting business after his death in 1909
Sherwood Miss G	Gladys	Miss	1s.	1939	41	school teacher	Kipling Road				1920s SCF collector; Cheltenham branch of the NUT; Central School for Girls - and Old Girls Association Vice-Pres 1940s
Shilton Miss		Miss	5s.	x			Prestbury				
Shilton Mr FH	Frank Howard	Mr	£1.1s.	1921	67	[railway] time table clerk, single [retired]	Cleeve Hill			CofE Cleeve Hill	St Peters Church member, Cleeve Hill; acting churchwarden by 1947
Simpson Miss AC	Charlotte Alner (CA of Cranham (earlier subs))	Miss	1s.	1939	56	teaching and writing	Stonebanks, Cranham				BSc, FRGS (Fellow of the Royal Geographic Soc) 1931 talked at Painswick on life in Czechoslovakia; living with a number of young teenage students in 1939; gave several Art Gallery talks (maps for schoolchildren) and to Cotswold Naturalists 1930s; taught at Ribston High School
Simpson Mr D	David	Mr	1s.	1939	34	public works labourer, married	Sevenhampton				living with wife and his father
Simpson Rev Father OSB	T S Sebastian	Rev	5s.	news		Assistant priest (St Gregorys)				Catholic	St Gregory's; member of the Knights of St Columba (Catholic)
Sims Rev and Mrs A	Mary E	Mrs	3s.6d	1939	60	UDD	Whittington			nonconformist	
Sims Rev and Mrs A	Andrew	Mr	3s.6d	1939	78	educational missionary retired	Whittington			nonconformist	One-time principal of London Missionary College in

											Calcutta, speaking at St Andrews Church Fellowship 1934, speaking at Charlton Brotherhood
Sisson Mrs	?Sophia	Mrs	1s.	1939	58	UDD (wife of Marine engineer Henry)	Hatherley Court Road	1			
Sisterson Miss M	Margaret Grace	Miss	1s.	1939	47	assistant school teacher	Hall Road				NUT, Naunton Park school with Dye
Skarratt Miss R	Rose Eveleen	Miss	£1.1s.	1939	62	private means	Prestbury Road	1			Living with brother, a nurseryman
Skelton Mr J O M	John Osborne Marshall	Mr	10s.	1921	74	(1921 Boot manufacture r's agent) accountant retired, married	Carlton Street, then Kings Road		Lib	CofE St John	County Councillor, JP; Pres Liberal Association; d1942 St John's church funeral; LONU committee and vice-chair in 1937
Skinner Mr FS	Frederick Samuel	Mr	5s.	1939		school head teacher, retired	Vittoria Walk				FS Skinner was principal of the Douglas School Vittoria Walk 1929
Slater Miss EM	Evelyn Mary (a sister)	Miss	1s.	1911	62	[?eye surgeon]					?a Miss E Slater was house surgeon at Eye Hospital [left 1936]
Slater Misses D and W	Isobel Margaret	Miss	1s.	1911	59	private means	1 Malvern Place			CofE Christ Church	?came to Cheltenham with widowed mother after father died - money from his textile business; Misses Slater (2) Christ Church and Missionary Society fundraising; 1945 attending funeral of Briggs (GW and IM living together in 1939)
Slater Misses D and W	Gertrude Winifred	Miss	1s.	1911	60	private means	1 Malvern Place			CofE Christ Church	?came to Cheltenham with widowed mother after father died - money from his textile business; Misses Slater (2) Christ Church and Missionary

											Society fundraising; 1945 attending funeral of Briggs (GW and IM living together in 1939)
Slater Mrs	Mary Ann	Mrs	1s.	1939	80	widow, private means	24 St George's Road			CofE St Matthew	Obit for husband Alfred 1926, railway manager, a JP, member of commerce, St Matthews church
Smedley Mrs EA	none in Cheltenham ? Mrs Doris G in Evesham	Mrs	1s.	1939	35	wife of Mr Alfred W coal and fruit merchant	Evesham				visits Winchcombe (playing violin)
Smith Councillor P T	Percy T	CC	10s.	1939	55	managing director Smiths Systems, married	Hatherley Road		Con	CofE Christ Church	Lansdown Ward Conservative, Borough Councillor 1920s-40s, presiding at LONU meeting 1932, 1935, supporter of Lipson 1937 (independent conservative), Christ Church connection
Smith Miss		Miss	1s.								
Smith Miss F E	Florence Ellen	Miss	1s.	1939	66	apartment house-keeper	49 Rodney Road			Baptist Salem	Salem Baptist church connection (funerals)
Smith Miss F M C	Frances M C	Miss	1s.	1939	35	school teacher	Sevenhampton				living with parents C F Smith
Smith Misses F M and A E	Alice Elizabeth (sisters)	Miss	1s.	1939	58	UDD	Pilford Road				AE manageress of Park Farm Preserves Ltd, Winchcombe 1934
Smith Misses F M and A E	Florence May (sisters)	Miss	1s.	1939	61	UDD	Pilford Road				
Smith Mr and Mrs CF	Maria/Marie	Mrs	1s.	1939	63	UDD	Sevenhampton				
Smith Mr and Mrs CF	Charles Frederick	Mr	1s.	1939	64	retired farmer	Sevenhampton				Sevenhampton school board manager, parish councillor
Smith Mr A W	Arthur W	Mr	1s.	news	72	grocer and wine merchant, married	Winchcombe			CofE Winchcombe	Obit 1937 good churchman (Church of England), 50 years in Winchcombe trade, parish councillor

Smith Mrs O H	Mary A (late husband O H)	Mrs	1s.	1939	62	widow, incapacitate d (living with ?son etc)	Perrin Terrace Woodmancote			Highbury	Dickens Society member; Highbury Church member (Congregation al); Oxford Street Sisterhood; daughter of an alderman
Snowdon Miss L	Lilla	Miss	2s.6d	1939	56	private means	Cranford, Christ Church Road	2		CofE	Mrs Fairfax Rhodes their mother, probably Church of England
Snowdon Miss M	Margaret	Miss	£1.1s.	1939	57	private means	Cranford, Christ Church Road (with sister Lilla)	2		CofE	Pedestrian Association member, Mrs Fairfax Rhodes their mother, probably Church of England
Sparks Miss BM	Beatrice Margaret	Miss	5s.	1921	59	Head teacher	Fauconberg Villas, Bayshill Road	1			Principal of Ladies College
Spencer Mr J	James	Mr	2s.6d	1921	90	head school teacher retired, married	Charlton Kings				d1935
Spinney Mrs and Miss	Alice Louisa	Mrs	1s.	1939	81	private means, widowed	lenia, Brookway Road, Charlton Kings	1		CofE	Family Church of England; were Charlton Kings District Nursing Association hon sec (Miss Frances) (late father a professor of music in Leamington, d1888)
Spinney Mrs and Miss	daughter Frances Helen	Miss	1s.	1939	50	assistant mistress [school teacher] retired	lenia, Brookway Road, Charlton Kings			CofE	
Staddon Mr and Mrs L S	Elizabeth Joan BA, FLA nee Parry (m1935)	Mrs	5s.	1939	29	UDD (1934 Library assistant)	Southern Road			Unitarian Bayshill	
Staddon Mr and Mrs L S	Lenzil Sydney	Mr	5s.6d.	1939	33	science school teacher	Southern Road			Unitarian Bayshill	Married at Kidderminster but Barbara gave service and presents from Bayshill; earlier living with Barbara Thomas and still as Miss E J Parry; teaching at Technical College

Starling Mr and Mrs F R	Frank Robert	Mr	3s.6d	1939	70	political agent retired	Pilford Road		Lib	Unitarian Bayshill	Liberal agent, Bayshill Unitarian secretary and treasurer, Sec of Homecrofts; Mrs presumably same.
Starling Mr and Mrs FR	Ellen	Mrs	1s.	1939	70	UDD	Pilford Road			Unitarian Bayshill	
Stevens Mr OJ		Mr	1s.				Charlton Kings				
Stevens Mrs L	Louisa H	Mrs	7s.6d.	1939	78	widow (by 1921), private means	Idsall House, Prestbury	1		Catholic	Roman Catholic (daughter Miss Dorothy d1937 had been a Board of Guardians member); WI supporter
Stobie Mrs	Annie Maud	Mrs	1s.	1939	48	guest house proprietor, widow	Cambridge House, St George's Road				son educated at Dean Close
Storrs Mrs Noel	Constance Lucy	Mrs	5s.	news	78	private means, widow of Anglican clergyman Rev G Noel Storrs d1909	Balcarras Court, Charlton Kings			CofE	d1946 (in Hampshire 1939)
Stott Sir Philip Bt	Philip Sidney	Sir	£1.1s.	1921	77	retired architect engineer surveyor, married	Stanton Court, Broadway		Con	CofE	d1937 parish church funeral, Conservative, LONU District Council chair, attends Monro Briggs presentation
Straker Mrs	Caroline Mary	Mrs	10s.	1939	70	private means, widow	Crofton, Andover Road	1			big donation to charity; widow to master printer and publisher
Strickland Lady	Mary	Lady	10s.6d	news		private means	Cranham				
Stroud Miss	Evelyn	Miss	1s.	1939	21	municipal clerk (Cheltenham Borough Council)	Lebanon, New Barn Lane				Father the Municipal chief water inspector
Sturt Miss	Susie Dilys Rowland	Miss	1s.	1921	30	[UDD]	Sydenham Road			Highbury	Father a Congregational minister; Highbury Sunday School superintendent ; supporting event at Cambray Baptist (music), helping provide entertainment for old members of Union (workhouse) with Monro

											Briggs 1930; married 1937
Swann Mr RC	Robert Edward C	Mr	5s.	news	34	school teacher, married	Jordans, Moorend Park Road				Cheltenham College; giving Art Gallery talk; Historical Association member; supports Lipson in 1937
Swiney Lt Col	George Walter Brandon	Lt Col	1s.	1939	80	retired Indian army, married	Swinford Malvern Road	1		CofE Christ Church	d1940 army veteran, Christ Church
Symonds Mrs	Louisa	Mrs	1s.	news	67	home duties (late husband a retail jeweller)	70 The Promenade	1	Lib	CofE Holy Apostles	d.1937 Holy Apostles funeral, active church worker, Dickens Fellowship member, ?Liberal supporter
Tait Miss EM	Euphemia Margaret	Miss	1s.	1939	68	author	St Luke's Villas, College Road		Con		1921 in London as journalist and parliamentary secretary to Horatio Bottomley MP; in Cheltenham 1930s a well- known local author (male pseudonym 'John Ironsides'), Women's United Film Association, branch secretary; Women's Conservative and Unionist Association (Apperley branch sec, often making addresses - 1936 talked about the Locarno Pact; 22 Nov 1933 'women can prevent war' at talk to girls of the Abbey School, anti- rearmament); d1945
Tandy Mr	?Walter Hadwen	Mr	1s.	1939	39	Registered electrical constructor, married	Hudson Street/Carlton Street				(Father Obit: 1931), W H chair of Cheltenham Unemployed Allotment

											Association at Bayshill, chair of Electricians Association
Taylor Ald. PP	Philip Philip	Mr	10s.	1921	71	[Pearl Insurance and by house agent in 1921], married	Crendon Lansdown Road		Lib	Baptist Salem	LONU Vice-Pres; Board of Guardians member, education committee, alderman, mayor 1930; Salem Baptist church wedding president of Liberal Club
Taylor Miss DM	Dora M	Miss	1s.	1939	33	assistant school teacher	Evesham Road			Congregatio nal	LONU Pates Grammar School teacher who set up the junior branch for girls; Historical Association (daughter of a Congregational minister)
Taylor Misses MM and E	Mary M and ??	Miss	1s.	news						Methodist Wesleyan	Wesleyan?Pre stbury/Gretton WI members
Taylor Misses MM and E		Miss	1s.	news						Methodist Wesleyan	Wesleyan?Pre stbury/Gretton WI members
Taylor Mr	?William Mr W	Mr	1s.	1939	63	fruit and confection manager [for George's], retired, widower	Oberlin Lodge, Hatherley			Congregatio nal	Sunday School teacher, Reddings Congregational Chapel with Miss Wood (linked to Highbury Church)
Taylor Mrs A	?	Mrs	1s.	news		widow	?Little Herberts Road, Charlton Kings				1942 news
Teal Mrs C	Ella Yeates wife of Charles Joseph, journalist	Mrs	1s.	1939	50	UDD	London Road				member of Cheltenham Choral Society and the Musical Guild librarian, husband former chief reporter of Echo,
Terry Mr E	Eugene Edward	Mr	1s.	1939	61	grocer, married, incapacitated	Priory Parade			St George St Wesleyan	obit 1941 St George Street Wesleyan church, pew steward; owned Buckle's Stores (selling Empire Goods) in 93 Bath Road
Thelfall Miss	Adeline Threlfall	Miss	1s.	1921	73	private means	Albert Road			CofE St Matthew	WW1 Prestbury VAD hospital;

											Church Missionary Society; St Matthew's church member
Thody Mrs	Florence Rose	Mrs	1s.	1939	66	married to William, company director Automobile Engineering	Cloudhaven, Harp Hill		Con	CofE All Saints	Women's YMCA, Life Boat Appeal, Charlton Kings Conservatives Women's Section; daughter's funeral at All Saints 1937
Thomas Mr and Mrs Jeremy	Annie	Mrs	2s.6d		75	[UDD]	Walanda, Eldorado Road			CofE Christ Church	Both committee members of Lifeboat charity, Christ Church members;
Thomas Mr and Mrs Jeremy	Walter Jeremy	Mr	2s.6d	1939	75	Bank manager, widowed by 1939	Walanda, Eldorado Road	1		CofE Christ Church	PO Musical Society (in the YMCA), golden wedding 1937; son was killed on the Somme WW1; both committee members of Lifeboat charity, Christ Church members;
Thomas Mr JD	?J G (no J D anywhere) ? Joseph G	Mr	1s.	1939	41	school master, married	The Gastons, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury				Teacher, Dickens Fellowship (Tewkesbury branch) secretary, Tewkesbury YMCA treasurer
Thompson Mrs TH	Annie Marion, wife of Thomas Henry	Mrs	2s.6d	1939	76	private means, widow	Oldfield Court, St Mark's	2		Highbury	Obit for husband 1928; Highbury Congregational Church; ex President Women's Free Church Council
Thorn Mr HH	Herbert Henry	Mr	1s.	1939	56	tailor's traveller, married	Kingsley Gardens, St Mark's				d1954 (no news)
Tickell Miss	Ada	Miss	5s.	1939	39	UDD, living with widowed mother	Verbena, London Road			CofE All Saints	All Saints Sunday School superintendent ; art student; late father in India civil service
Tillyard Mr W	?Kerchever (no others)	Mr	2s.6d	1939	71	MA, school teacher retired, married	Eldersfield' Hales Road	1		CofE All Saints	Private tutor in 1920s, Chess player, All Saints Church, d1947

Toms Mrs	?Alice Kate, wife of Ernest, wood machinist HH Martyn	Mrs	1s.	1939	52	UDD	Fairhaven Street Leckhampton			CofE Emmanuel	Emmanuel church member
Tosia Mr A	Alphonso Tosio	Mr	1s.	news		?	Cleeve View Road			Highbury	Highbury Church and scout master; Charlton Kings Brotherhood connection; Brunners CC retiring treasurer
Towers Mr RM	Robert Montagu	Mr	10s.	1911	67	school teacher [retired], single	Bath Road			CofE	obit 1938, son of a vicar, Cheltenham College master to 1928, manager of Dunally St School, Industrial Christian Fellowship meeting - on platform, retired to Bournemouth
Trace Mr and Mrs	Kate	Mrs	1s.		55	home duties	Battledown Lodge				
Trace Mr and Mrs	George (d1938) and Kate	Mr	1s.	1939	56	accountant	Battledown Lodge				May be related to Van Tromp whose sister Alice married a Trace
Tranter Misses K and D	Kate, sisters	Miss	1s.	1921	68	home duties, practical milliner Cavendish House (1921)	Fairfield Park Road			Baptist Salem	Both Salem Baptist church workers
Tranter Misses K and D	Emily (E not D in earlier subs), sisters	Miss	1s.	1921	70	home duties, practical milliner Cavendish House (1921)	Fairfield Park Road			Baptist Salem	Free Church Council, Baptist Missionary Society, Sunday School teacher, treasurer of Oxford Street Sisterhood (obit 1937 for Emily)
Treleaven Miss A	Alice	Miss	1s.	1939	53	drapers assistant [sister of Ernest and Lily]	Priory Buildings				
Treleaven Miss L	Lily	Miss	1s.	1939	56	UDD [sister of Ernest and Alice]	Priory Buildings				
Treleaven Mr E	Ernest	Mr	10s.	1939	68	piano and organ dealer	Priory Buildings				Membership Sec LONU 1933 to 1940 (literature), joins UNA; chess club

Trevett Mrs ME	?Mabel Ellen	Mrs	1s.	1939	43	UDD, married (but husband Cyril living in Birmingham)	Alstone Avenue				Nothing in news
Trollope Mr C W A	Charles William Annesley	Mr	£1.1s.	1871	85	civil servant, East Indies	of London				d1935 - presumably visiting town
Trotter Miss	Hilda Elizabeth	Miss	1s.	1939	31	landscape gardener (at Charlton Court)	Charlton Kings				Born in NZ; in Women's Land Army, Women's Farm and Garden Association (1940s)
Troughton Miss	?Ellen Mary Ingles	Miss	1s.	1939	42	hospital cook	Eton Lodge, The Park				British Legion fundraising events with a Miss Conder
Troughton Miss LE	Lolotte Eva	Miss	3s.	1911	46	music teacher at Ladies College	Bayshill Road				Born in South Africa
Truby Miss	Mary Adele	Miss	2s.6d	1939	70	private means, (alone)	Fairfield Park Road Leckhampton		Lib	Baptist Salem	Salem Baptist church member; supports Lipson as Liberal 1925
Tucker Mr A	?James Aloyaui	Mr	1s.	1921	59	boot and shoe maker, married	Great Western Terrace			Catholic	St Gregory's Catholic church' member of Knights of St Columba
Tucker Rev Keith	Keith	Rev	1s.	1939	31	Baptist minister, married	Fyling Lodge, Mead Road			Baptist Salem	Salem Baptist pastorate; Christian Endeavour Union; hosting German Baptist visitors in 1932; left town 1935
Tuke Miss AC	Agnes Cecilia	Miss	£1	1911	75	head teacher retired	8 Pittville Villas			CofE All Saints	Member of All Saints church; ex pupil Cheltenham Ladies College
Turley Miss	Lilian [or sister Louise]	Miss	2s.	1939	60 or 62	retail confectioner (both)	High Street				Left for Brighton by 1939
Turner Mr Albert	Albert Edward	Mr	1s.	1939	21	Insurance inspector, married	Arle Road				Lipson supporter in 1937
Turner Mr DL	David Lewis	Mr	3s.6d	1939	69	builder and decorator, married	Cliftonville, Bafford Lane, Charlton Kings			CofE St Mary Charlton Kings	Obit: 1950 prominent in church work - superintendent of Emmanuel and St James Sunday Schools; leading mens/lads bible class at St Philip and St James; sidesman at St

											Mary's Charlton Kings
Turner Miss M		Miss	1s.								??St Gregory's hockey club treasurer/sec (Catholic);
Unwin Rev PW	Percy W	Rev	£1	1939	61	retired schoolmaster taking clerical duties, married	Greenacre, Charlton Park Gate	2		CofE	former master 1901-34 then assistant chaplain to Cheltenham College; taking Leckhampton church services
Uzzell Mr G	George	Mr	1s.	1939	73	Retired commercial traveller	London Road			CofE Holy Apostles	d.1940, Holy Apostles
Uzzell Mrs	Elizabeth wife of George	Mrs	1s.	1921	74	private means d.1937	London Road			CofE Holy Apostles	(Primrose League); d.1937; Holy Apostles church member
Van Tromp Mrs	Louisa	Mrs	1s.	1939	82	widow UDD (music teacher widowed by 1891)	Carlton Street				
Vaughan Mrs	Edith Caroline Wills (in earlier subs list 'Bishops Cleeve')	Mrs	5s.	1939	54	school teacher (retired by 1939)	Overton House, St George's Road			CofE	Born Dorset to Anglican minister Rev John Parr; marries in Australia; advertising as principal of Overton House School (private boarding school from 1932); Cleeve WI; in 1939 moves to London
Vaughan Rev WH	Herbert William	Rev	5s.	1939	62	clerk in holy orders, single	Wellcroft The Leigh			CofE	Keble College; rector at Saintbury then 1934 vicar of The Leigh, British Red Cross Society quartermaster, British Legion member,
Vernall Miss CE	Constance Evelyn	Miss	1s.	1939	31	managing director of Hotel by 1939 [takes over from father]	Rodney House Hotel			CofE	no news
Vernall Mr FE	Frank	Mr	5s.	1939	65	hotel proprietor in 1938 when wife dies, then in 1939 civil servant retired	Rodney House Hotel		Con	CofE St Matthew	Chamber of Commerce; Conservative supporter (secretary of Middle Ward, with Monro

						[father of Constance]					Briggs); St Matthews church sidesman (Anglican). Ward Collector 1935
Vickers Miss Aileen	Aileen Maud Beatrice	Miss	£1	1939	38	music teacher	Lansdown Terrace	2		CofE Christ Church	1930s music staff at Ladies College; ?Christ Church member
Viner Mr F W	Francis William	Mr	1s.	1939	60	Insurance agent, retired, married	Osborne Terrace, Market Street			Quaker	obit 1942 prominent in Adult School movement and sec of Cripples Aid Association; Quaker (Society of Friends)
Wadley Mr A J	Alfred John	Mr	5s.	1939	71	Chief Engineer Irrigation Board India, retired, married	Haverstock' Eldorado Crescent			CofE Christ Church	hon treasurer Cheltenham Association of Boy Scouts in 1920s and Jesse Almshouses; Christ Church member
Wainwright Miss	Maud	Miss	1s.	1921	62	home duties	Badgeworth Court and Malvern Lodge				Attending Badgeworth funerals (living with relatives)
Waite Coun. T W	Thomas Wilfred	CC	£1	1939	61	jeweller and managing director, married	Engelberg, Cleeve Hill			Highbury	Rotary Club president, former chairman chamber of commerce, borough councillor elected 1929 as a Chamber of Commerce candidate (alderman by 1944) [?may link to Highbury - strong family links eg his sisters the Misses Waite]
Waite Misses	Ethel Mary	Miss	1s.	1939	55	independent means	10 Oxford Parade, off London Road		Lib	Highbury	Free Church Council members; Highbury Church Oxford Street Sisterhood (E M); Liberal Association (1947 E M); S E (Nellie) d (sisters of T W Waite)

Waite Misses	Sophie Ellen	Miss	1s.	1939	64	independent means	10 Oxford Parade, off London Road			Highbury	Free Church Council members; S E (Nellie) d (sisters of T W Waite)
Walcroft Mr	John	Mr	3s.6d	1939	77	apartment housekeeper retired, widowed	Blenheim Parade			CofE All Saints	All Saints CEMS (Church of England Missionary Society). Ward Collector 1935
Walcroft Mrs	Isabella	Mrs	1s.	1921	72	wife of John, d1936	Blenheim Parade			CofE All Saints	All Saints church member
Walker Miss	Evelyn Grace	Miss	1s.	1939	38	UDD (living with father TBW)	Glen Lea, Cirencester Road, Charlton Kings			CofE St Mary Charlton Kings	
Walker Miss E J	Ethel Jean	Miss	3s.6d				Kingston Villa, St George's Road				
Walker Mr and Mrs	Thomas Barton	Mr	1s.	1939	85	farmer retired, widower	Glen Lea, Cirencester Road, Charlton Kings		Con	CofE St Mary Charlton Kings	Overseer for 20 years for Charlton Kings urban district council (1937) ; letter supports Baldwins Govt in 1935 [Conservative]
Walker Mr and Mrs	Annie	Mrs	1s.	1921	69	home duties	Glen Lea, Cirencester Road, Charlton Kings			CofE St Mary Charlton Kings	Obit: 1939 service at Charlton Kings parish church
Walker Mrs	[too many options]	Mrs	1s.	x							
Waller Miss D H	Dorothy Harriet	Miss	5s.	1939	51	nurse	4 Clarendon Villas			CofE Holy Trinity	daughter of clergyman; stepmother active at Holy Trinity Church; hospital nurse in 1911 census; head of a boarding house at Ladies College in 1921, then continued as state registered midwife and physio
Walley Mr	Reginald M	Mr	1s.	1939	57	surveyor [customs and excise]	Dinedor, Libertus Road				Hon treasurer Gloucestershire beekeepers association; supported Czechoslovakia relief fund;
Walsh Mr Ewart	Charles E.	Mr	1s.	1939	47	College tutor, married	Old Bath Road			CofE	1935 retiring sec of Historical Association (BA, BSc); Art Gallery lectures - chair; Dickens

											Fellowship; obit 1946 Charles BA BSc, 58, lecturer in History and English and warden of chapel at St Pauls Training College
Wane Mr JS	John S	Mr	£1	1939	42	barrister and tutor, married	14 Lansdown Place				LONU press secretary late 1930s; lecturer at St Paul's training college; presiding at college branch of the British Universities LNU; regular speaker at local debating societies (Winchcombe, Tewkesbury etc; member of Literary Society; UNA 1945
Wanklyn Miss	Elisabeth	Miss	1s.	1939	59	private means	Pittville Circus			CofE All Sants	RNLI Lifeboats branch sec and chair; supporting British Syrian Mission; active church worker at All Saints; Primrose League; supporting YMCA
Warden Mrs	Jane Bates	Mrs	2s.	1939	82	retired, widow	The Promenade			CofE	attended Mrs Briggs funeral; supporting Lipson in 1937
Warner Mr and Mrs H	Gertrude	Mrs	3s.6d		71	UDD	Halland Road, Leckhampton			CofE Leckhampton	Obit: 1940 'was very active woman and was known to a large number of residents in the Leckhampton district'.
Warner Mr and Mrs H	Harry	Mr	3s.6d	1921	69	brewer and farmer, retired	Halland Road, Leckhampton	1		CofE Leckhampton	Obit 1935: Leckhampton church, retired brewer (Norwood Brewery)
Warr Mr Hedley	Arthur Hedley	Mr	£1.1s.	1939	36	school master	Dean Close School			CofE	Dean Close School house master and history teacher 1921-1941; Bayshill Debate on democracy

											and fascism - presiding 3 Nov 1934; LONU debate about role of international police force - speaker with Bush 1934; St Matthews preaching
Watts Miss		Miss	1s.	news							either Christ Church member or Coombe Hill Methodists and Temperance!
Weaving Mr T G	Thomas George	Mr	1s.	1939	52	teacher, married	Orrisdale Terrace, Oriel Road				Master at Central School and Old Boys Association founder, ? Antivivisectioni st (letter to news 1940)
Webb Mr R H	Rupert Hewitt	Mr	1s.	1939	39	managing director company manufacturi ng bricks etc, married	Charlton Rise, London Road			CofE Leckhampto n	Golf Club president, Church of St Peter, Leckhampton
Webb Rev and Mrs Peplow	Francis Hanmer, MA	Rev	2s.6d	1939	68	clergyman retired	Malvern Road	1		CofE Christ Church	Canon, vicar of Christ Church , Sec of Glos Church Schools Association, supporter of various missionary charities, old boy of Cheltenham College, travelled to Canada; 1932 prayers for disarmament, Town Hall and 1936 sermon on Abyssinia
Webb Rev and Mrs Peplow	Hilda Mary	Mrs	1s.	1939	64	home duties	Malvern Road			CofE Christ Church	
Webster Rev G E	George Edward	Rev	3s.6d	1921	84	clerk in holy orders, widow (when died)	Tredington vicarage	2		CofE	Church of England, d1936 leaving large estate; Tewkesbury rural district councillor, Board of Guardians; lived in America and Canada in 1880s

Welch Miss	Kate Brace	Miss	5s.	1939	64	private means	Douro Road			CofE	one of the daughters of Captain GAW Welch RN born in Geneva (d1907); supporting parish church events; member of exec committee of St Mary's Training College
Wheeler Miss	?Rebecca	Miss	1s.	1939	61	housekeeper for Mr J Arkell in 1934	Jersey Lodge, Hewlett Road			CofE St John	St John's church member; also possibly charity work for Board of Guardians/workhouse
White Mrs E E	Emma Elizabeth Evelyn	Mrs	10s.	1939	71	private means, widow [of cotton merchant, Irish]	1 Charlton Park Gate	2	Con	CofE	President of Hospital Board of Management 1940; donation £1400 to hospital - largest single donor 1941; still in town 1948 [son OC and a barrister] [Conservative?]
Whitham Mrs	Edith Mary	Mrs	2s.	1939	80	private means, [longtime] widow	Cleveland House, Evesham Road	1		CofE All Saints	Buried All Saints
Whittall Mr EG	Ewart Gladstone	Mr	1s.	1939	47	clerk in timber trade, married	Spenser Road, St Mark's		Lab	Unitarian Bayshill	1934 Chaired meeting at Bayshill on Adult Education; YMCA member reference to visiting Geneva; 1935 speaker at Women's International League (with Theodora F M) on ILO; WEA branch sec (Barbara branch chair, Paterson president); speaking in support of Labour Party 1939; talks to Central Brotherhood; supporter of Unemployed Service Club; preaching at

											Unitarian church; later 1940s St Marks Community Association
Whittard Miss M	Mary	Miss	1s.	1921	79	private school teacher in 1911	Bath Road			Baptist Salem	d1938, Salem Baptist church Sunday School teacher, deacon and church secretary for 65 years
Whittard Misses J, C and L	Louisa	Miss	1s.	1921	77	private school retired (all 3)	16 Park Place			Baptist Salem	Louisa also Salem, one of 2 founders of Salem Christian Endeavour Society
Whittard Misses J, C and L	Caroline	Miss	1s.	1921	83	private school retired (all 3)	16 Park Place			Baptist Salem	Caroline d1941 Salem, former Missionary secretary, Sunday School teacher, leader of Gas Green Mother's meeting, formerly headmistress of the Hall School
Whittard Misses J, C and L	Jane	Miss	1s.	1921	84	private school retired (all 3)	16 Park Place	2		Baptist Salem	The Misses Whittards retired as teachers at The Hall [Girls School] in 1919
Wicks Mrs	Ellen	Mrs	1s.	news	76	widow of Baptist minister	31 Montpellier Villas		Lib	Baptist Salem	Obit: 1935 30 years with Salem Baptist church (late husband a pastor in Brum), Women's Liberal Association, Temperance Association
Wicksey Mrs	Emma Florence	Mrs	2s.	1939	60	boarding house keeper, widow	Park Place	1		Methodist Bethesda	Obit: 1948 lifelong supporter of Bethesda; landlady to Mrs Julia M Lyons (who leaves her some money in will 1933)
Wilkes Mrs	no obvious candidate	Mrs	1s.								

Willetts Misses	Lucy [sister]	Miss	5s.	1939	75	UDD	Seaton, Cranham Road				Donations to charity and funeral attending; late father employing 14 men in painting business
Willetts Misses	Catherine [sister]	Miss	5s.	1939	75	UDD	Seaton, Cranham Road				
Williams Miss Pownall	Irene	Miss	2s.6d	1939	50	art teacher (living with widowed mother and sister Muriel)	Montpellier Grove				
Williams Mr J	?John Henry	Mr	1s.	1921	28					CofE	John H Williams reported in 1933 as a member of League - especial mention of work on entertainment and printing committees of the national conference in 1932; good deal of time on LONU propaganda before going to Oxford; former Grammar School boy, who was nominated to attend LONU conference at Geneva while a student, choral scholar, at Oxford in 1933; [on Ancestry, later become clergyman]
Williams Mrs	?Edith Nellie	Mrs	1s.	1939	68	UDD, wife of retired postman	Duke Street			CofE St John	?mother of a John H Williams, former Grammar School boy, who was nominated to attend LONU conference at Geneva while a student, choral scholar, at Oxford in 1933; member of St John's church
Williams Mrs OM	Olivia Mary	Mrs	5s.	news		widow	Yanworth House, Yanworth			CofE	married in St Philip and James, Leckhampton (Church of England), many

											donations include Czechoslovakian relief fund, obit 1943 widow of Rev, bequests to Church Missionary Soc, SPG, Anti-vivisection,
Willis Miss M	Margaret M (daughter of John and Hilda)	Miss	1s.	1939	24	music teacher	Heatherbrae, Libertus Road			Unitarian Bayshill	Sec of Esperanto Society; Anglo-Polish Society in 1940 at Bayshill Church Women's League; Post Office Musical Society (she was a cellist), Methodist; ex-Pates Grammar School pupil; Rotary connection - playing for refugees 1940
Willis Mr and Mrs J	John (daughter Margaret also member)	Mr	3s.6d	1939	52	master baker and confectioner	Heatherbrae, Libertus Road		Lib	Methodist	Liberals, Esperanto Society, JP, ex-town councillor of Tewkesbury, Methodist;
Willis Mr and Mrs J	Hilda (daughter Margaret also member)	Mrs	1s.	1939	51	UDD	Heatherbrae, Libertus Road			Methodist	Mrs W a ward organiser for the National Declaration ballot 1934
Willis Mrs	?Elizabeth A	Mrs	1s.	1939	73	home duties, husband a retired worker at H H Martyn	Glenfall Street			CofE	Parish church marriage
Willoughby Miss	Sarah Louisa	Miss	5s.	1939	85	[independent means]	Royal Parade	3		CofE Christ Church	Obit: 1942 CMS Association (Missionary charity) - sec of Cheltenham branch, living with family - as sister of Major General in Indian Army, JP, retired (1921), father was an Admiral; Christ Church
Willoughby Miss	(D J in earlier subs) Dorothy June	Miss	2s.6d	news	22	[independent means]	[Ombersley, Hatherley Road]			CofE	grandfather a retired solicitor of Cheltenham; daughter of Captain Edwin Charles

											Willoughby, editor of The Echo, killed at Gallipoli in WWI (m1938, society wedding); Church of England
Wilson Miss	?Kathleen Laura Wilson	Miss	2s.	1939	39	housekeeper [to her widowed mother Laura?]	Spa Buildings [Montpellier]			Presbyt St Andrew	Late father a CoE clergyman; Hon Sec of Cheltenham branch of RSPCA; ? Supporter of St Andrews Presbyterian church; ?supports District Nursing Association
Wilson Rev WB	William Bernard	Rev	2s.6d	1921	39	Baptist minister, married	Copt Elm Road, Charlton Kings			Baptist Charlton Kings	Charlton Kings Baptist Church for 9 years (left in 1935); president of Free Church Council, President of Sunday School Union, president of Christian Endeavour Union; married in 1935 at Salem Baptist Church
Wingate Miss	Ethel Elizabeth	Miss	1s.	1939	66	private teacher of art	5 Suffolk Square			CofE All Saints	Dickens Fellowship; SPG church work; All Saints
Wingate Miss	?Elizabeth sister of Ethel	Miss	1s.	1921	77	visitor with sister					
Winterbotham Ald Clara	Clara	Miss	£1.1s.	1939	55	private means	Garden House		Lib	CofE Holy Trinity	LONU committee and Vice President; MBE; Councillor, Education committee, mayor, chair Liberal Association, Holy Trinity
Winterbotham Miss LM	Lilian Mary (sister Clara)	Miss	£1.1s.	1939	51	private means	Garden House		Lib	CofE Holy Trinity	Charitable donations; Holy Trinity church connections; Liberal
Wolstenholme Mr W	William	Mr	10s.	1939	68	retired chemist	Oxford Street			Walker Memorial	?connection to Walker Memorial Church

Wolstenholme Mrs	Edith	Mrs	1s.	1939	72	UDD	Oxford Street			Walker Memorial	?connection to Walker Memorial Church
Wood Miss	Eliza Ellen (Nellie)	Miss	1s.	1939	56	school mistress 1921 (head teacher retired 1939)	Beechwood, Rowanfield Road			Congregational	1934 retires from head of Dunally Street School (40 years), also Sunday School teacher at Up Hatherley and The Reddings Congregational chapel (linked to Highbury Church) with a Mr W Taylor
Wood Miss		Miss	1s.	x							
Woodard Miss LM	Lilian Mary	Miss	1s.6d.	1921	59	[home duties]	Aberfoyle in Keynsham Road	1	Con	CofE All Saints	Conservative Association south ward member, secretary and hon treasurer; All Saints church (SPG supporter); [father and mother both d1913 - owned fish and game dealer's business in Montpellier also a director of George's, caterers and had been a town councillor - money in trust for 4 daughters, 3 sons]
Woodward Mrs	?Irene	Mrs	1s.	1939	33	UDD	Cirencester Road	1		CofE Holy Apostles	Husband Kenneth a schoolmaster and active in RNLI with Miss Wanklyn; married in Holy Apostles
Worrall Miss A	Ann	Miss	1s.	1939	80	incapacitated by 1939	Prestbury Road			Methodist Wesleyan	obit 1942: assisted with friends, the Hancock family, in their bakery; Wesleyan church member;
Wyatt Miss Olive	Olive	Miss	5s.	1939	33	school mistress [teacher]	Collingwood, St George's Road				Central School with Miss Catley (living with Catley and Yarnold in 1935)

Wylie Rev WSH	William Samuel Herbert	Rev	2s.6d	1939	71	clergyman, retired	St George's Road			Presbyt, St Andrew	supported Victoria Nursing Home, Cheltenham Musical Guld, Music Festival; assisted at St Andrews Church (presbyterian)
Yarnold Miss D A	Dorothy Amy	Miss	1s.	1939	30	school mistress [teacher]	Collingwood, St George's Road				living with Miss Elspeth Catley and Miss Olive Wyatt (1935 electoral rolls); all teachers at Girls Central School
Yeend Mr and Mrs	Marie	Mrs	1s.	1939	62	UDD	Egremont, Argyll Road		Lib		Mrs E member of Liberal Association
Yeend Mr and Mrs	Ernest Marchant	Mr	1s.	1939	64	watchmaker	Egremont, Argyll Road		Lib		1934 ward organiser for LONU for All Saints area; hon sec Liberal Association
Yeo Mr GC	George Christophe r	Mr	1s.	1939	83	linen manufacture r retired	Cleeve Corner, Prestbury			CofE Prestbury	Prestbury parish churchwarden (d1940)
Yeo Mrs FM	Frances Mary	Mrs	1s.	1939	59	independent means	Blenheim Cottage, Prestbury				
Zebedee Mr E	Ernest	Mr	1s.	1939	53	Clothiers assistant	24 Ewlyn Road			CofE Emmanuel	YMCA; Emmanuel Church peoples warden 1933; employed at The Famous (see Kearsy)

