

Gloucestershire

Cider with Rosie, book

This book, standard classroom reading in the 1970s, represented my knowledge of Gloucestershire when I started a new job as a software engineer in Stroud on 1 May 1985. On that first morning half my team weren't in the office, as they'd been up at dawn morris dancing.

Lent by Jan Broadway, Co-ordinator for VCH Gloucestershire.

Tree-ring dated timber core

This core sample was taken from one of the oak timbers of the early Tudor merchant's house in Westgate Street, Gloucester. Reputedly the house where Bishop Hooper was lodged before being burnt at the stake in nearby St Mary's Square, until recently the building housed the Folk Museum and is now being transferred into the care of the Gloucester Civic Trust. The tree was felled in the winter of 1515/16, probably across the river in the Forest of Dean.

Lent by Dr Andy Moir, Tree-Ring Services, Oakraven Field Centre.

Photograph of a newly shorn sheep and a sample of handspun wool

The sheep were photographed in a field on the Fosse Way outside Cirencester. The wool was handspun from a fleece and dyed using onion skins. The wealth of the Cotswolds depended on the wool trade in the Middle Ages. Today the sight of lambs gambolling in the fields is still a harbinger of spring.

Lent by Ethelwyn, who span the wool.

Cheese packaging and a scrap of cheesecloth

Cheese-making has a long tradition in the Severn Vale, where Single and Double Gloucester was traditionally made from only the once nearly extinct Gloucester cattle. The cheese rolling on Cooper's Hill used to be limited to the inhabitants of Brockworth, but now attracts entrants from all over the world. Artisan cheesemakers now abound in the county.

Lent by Henry, a local cheesemaker.

Postcard of Tewkesbury Abbey and the flooded meadow

The River Severn and its tributaries have shaped the history of the Vale of Gloucester. Tewkesbury Abbey rising above the surrounding water was one of the iconic images of the devastating floods of 2007, when the Victorian waterworks upstream were inundated.

Lent by Carole, a Tewkesbury resident in 2007.

Postcard of Edward II's tomb, Gloucester cathedral

The royal connections of the county stretch from the Saxon palace at Kingsholm to Prince Charles at Highgrove. Cheltenham's success as a spa was promoted by a visit from George III. The most notorious royal connection is the murder of Edward II, allegedly with a red hot poker, at Berkley castle. The influx of pilgrims to his tomb at Gloucester was a great boost to the abbey, which became a cathedral after the Dissolution.

Lent by Nancy, a former cathedral guide at Gloucester.

Gloucester Rugby shirt

Rugby has traditionally been more popular than football in the county. Gloucester have played at Kingsholm since 1891.

Lent by Len, a Kingsholm season ticket holder.

Duck letter opener

This represents the ducks and other waterfowl at WWT Slimbridge Wetland Centre, founded by Peter Scott in 1946 as a pioneering centre for conservation.

Lent by Simon, a naturalist and conservationist.

Glosters back badge

For their gallantry in fighting back to back during the Battle of Alexandria in 1801, the Gloucestershire Regiment was given the unique honour of wearing a badge at the back of their caps. The regiment was amalgamated in 1994, but the back badge is still worn by the successor regiment.

Lent by David, a former sergeant in the regiment.

Promotional pack of playing cards

The Cheltenham Festival, the spring National Hunt meeting, has run at Prestbury since 1912. The course is on the site of a medieval deer park and has been the scene of racing since the 1830s.

Lent by Peter, who used to be a bookie's runner.

Dowty World, January 1992

Gloucestershire's association with aircraft dates back to World War 1 and the formation of the Gloster Aircraft Company. Although aircraft are no longer built in the county, there are a number of engineering companies involved in their production.

Lent by John, a former Dowty employee.