

A circular bandstand had been built directly in front of the Pump Room by December 1900, but was moved to its present site the following year, allowing a clearer view of the spa building. The Cheltenham branch of the Royal Air Force Association (RAFA) funded a £6,000 restoration of the bandstand in 1994-95, and contributed to further restoration in 2010 following fire damage.



Bandstand in front of Pump Room, postcard circa 1900



Nissen huts in front of Pump Room, photograph mid-1940s

The already-decaying Pump Room was commandeered for use as a US Army storage depôt during the Second World War, from 1942. The area of grass in front of the Pump Room was covered by Nissen huts and barbed wire. By the time the military left, the Pump Room dome was only held up by the plaster and the timbers had been eaten away by dry rot. Under threat of demolition for many years, Pittville Pump Room was fortunately saved for the town. After extensive restoration, it was re-opened by the seventh Duke of Wellington in 1960.

● A refreshment and entrance lodge (now the café on Central Cross Drive) was opened in 1903. Here visitors paid their admission charge for entry to Pittville Park until 1954.



Refreshment and entrance lodge, now Central Cross Cafe, postcard circa 1903

● The building on the other side of Central Cross Drive is the headquarters of the 10<sup>th</sup> Cheltenham Scout Group (All Saints'). It was built in 1942 as an Air Raid Precaution Control and Report Centre and had several occupants until the Scouts took it over in 1982.

● Pittville Gates were the 'grand entrance' to the Estate and designed by architect Robert Stokes. They were erected in 1833, with the ornamental arch added in 1897.



The Italian-made Itala, 1908, at Pittville Gates, circa 1952



## Acknowledgements

Friends of Pittville is very grateful to **Sue Rowbotham** and **Jill Waller** for their help and advice on the text; to **Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum** for permission to reproduce George Rowe's lithograph of Joseph Pitt; to **Cheltenham's Local and Family History Library** for access to its collection; to **Terry Langhorn** and **Tom Clarke** for use of their postcards and illustrations; and to Cheltenham historians **Steven Blake**, **Sue Rowbotham** and **Jill Waller** for their several books on which we have based our research.

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Printed by Top Flight Printing © 01242 528906



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Registered charity number 1146790



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This leaflet is funded by Cheltenham Borough Council through a 'Promoting Cheltenham Fund 2011' grant

# Pittville Park & Estate

## THE EAST SIDE



Joseph Pitt, a lithograph by George Rowe, based on a portrait by Richard Dighton, circa 1835

**P**ITTVILLE was named after Joseph Pitt (1759-1842), who developed the estate in the 1820s. The Gloucestershire-born solicitor, and MP for Cricklade, invested in banking and land from 1789. With the development of Cheltenham as a spa town, Pitt established the fashionable suburb of Pittville to the north, with a Pump Room to rival Montpellier Spa and restrictions on manufacturing, trade and business.

The saline Pittville spa water is similar to that of Montpellier, but was said to be superior as it also contains sulphate of magnesia and bicarbonate of soda. Cheltenham spa water was recommended for obesity, gout, rheumatism, constipation and liver disorder, amongst other complaints.



Advertisement in George Rowe's Illustrated Cheltenham Guide, 1850

Pitt's original plan was for 500-600 houses on 100 acres, 177 of which were built between 1824 and 1842. Development slowed with only 216 completed by 1860, and by 1885 only another 29 had been built, with a further three by 1930.

From the earliest years the owners and occupiers of the Pittville estate had free access to the walks and rides, the pleasure grounds and gardens, which were surrounded by railings. Servants were only permitted to walk here if accompanying their employers and children. Visitors and non-residents could subscribe to take the waters or to use the rides, drives and walks. For example, in 1830 a family subscription to take the waters for the six-month season cost £2 2s (£2.10).



Pittville Lake and East Bridge, postcard circa 1910

- Wyman's Brook was dammed to form the Upper Lake, as it was known from the 1890s. The lake and two stone bridges follow the original plan of 1826. George Rowe's 1845 *Illustrated Cheltenham Guide* noted that its banks were 'overhung with weeping willows' with 'a gravel path winding along its margin'.

- The Pump Room, opened in 1830, was designed by architect John Forbes, and is inspired by the Temple of Ilissus in Athens, with Ionic columns on three sides and a small, beautifully-proportioned dome.

Plan of the Pittville Estate 1826, published in S.Y.Griffith's *New Historical Description of Cheltenham*, 1826



The extensive parkland was laid out by local nurseryman Richard Ware in 1827. The original plan shows a 'Promenade' between the Pump Room and the lake, bordered by formal flowerbeds and overlooked by villas. This gravelled path, also known as the 'Long Walk', was grassed over after the Council's purchase of the estate in 1890.

The three statues on the roof represent Hygeia, Greek goddess of health, flanked by Hippocrates, the Greek physician and 'father' of medicine, who is grasping a snake, and Aesculapius, god of medicine. The original statues were removed in 1937-39 as they were in poor condition, replaced in 1965 by copies made by Boulton & Sons of Cheltenham.

Statue of Greek physician, Hippocrates (circa 460-370BC), 1965 replica



By 1888 the Pump Room was not financially viable, and in 1890-91 Cheltenham Borough Council purchased the building and the 44 acres of surrounding gardens for £5,400 from the County of Gloucester Bank. In 1891 Pittville Gardens were formally opened to the public.



- Early postcards show a small wooden summer house on the north side of the Lake, and a smaller structure, possibly another shelter, to the east of it.

Summer house on East Lake and Pump Room, postcard circa 1900