



# smoke screen

NUMBER 1 DECEMBER 1992

Hon.Sec. Alison Merrett  
17 Hall Rd. Leckhampton  
Tel: 238086

Welcome to the first issue of the Leckhampton Local History Society newsletter, and seasons greetings to one and all.

Formed on October 1st 1992, following a great surge of interest generated by two successful slides shows given in aid of the Sue Ryder Home earlier in the year, the society has got off to a good start with over sixty members. Details of membership will be found on the back page. Please inform your friends of the existence of the society and urge them to come along and join us.

Already some well-attended meetings have taken place, and the future programme for 1993 is given below;

- Jan 21 "The Cheltenham and Gloucester Railroad". A talk by David Bick (author of 'Old Leckhampton')
- Feb 18 Members discussion evening
- Mar 18 "Cheltenham Museum and its relation to local history".  
A talk by Dr.Stephen Blake (Museum Director)
- Apr 15 Members discussion evening
- May 20 "Leckhampton Parish Church". A talk by Eric Miller  
(author of book of the same name).

All these events will be held at Leckhampton Court, either in the dining room or the chapel, starting at 7.30pm

During 1993 it is intended to conduct a survey of the members in order to find out which is the best night to hold meetings. At the moment these are on Thursday but obviously it does not suit everyone and it may be advantageous to make a change. Other venues are also to be explored, as getting to and from the Court in the dark winter nights is not ideal.

Plans are being laid for a number of interested members to attend a special evening at the Gloucester County Record Office in the New Year, in order to gain an insight into the documents they hold and how to gain access to them. There will be a limit to the number for obvious reasons but everyone will get a chance to take part if they wish. More details to follow.

The Postcard Group are hoping to make progress with a listing of all available cards showing Leckhampton within the next few weeks and would be pleased to learn of anyone that has any examples, whether members or not.

**LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

LECKHAMPTON IN NORMAN TIMES. by Bruce Stait

Major R.C.Barnard (a keen local historian) at a lecture given in the Parish Hall on Nov.11th 1898, gave the following extracts from Domesday Book for Leckhampton, which I speculate is his own translation.

"In the Hundred of Cheltenham, William Leuric holds Leckhampton from the king. Osgot held it in King Edward's time. Three hides pay geld there. There are two plough teams in demesne, and two villeins and eight bordars with one team. There are three serfs. The wood is a furlong in length and as much in width. The value is now and was formerly forty shillings.

In the Hundred of Cheltenham, Brictric holds from the king four hides in Leckhampton and pays geld. In King Edward's time he held two hides, and Ordric held the other two. King William, when going into Normandy, granted each estate to Brictric. He has in demesne one plough team, and nine bordars with three teams and two bondmen and one bondwoman. The wood is two furlongs long and two wide. It is worth thirty shillings".

(The modern name of Leckhampton in Domesday is recorded as Lechantone, which was merely the interpretation of the Norman clerk. 'Lechantone' has been taken to mean a place where leeks grow, but in some works is interpreted as 'a stony place').

From this we can see that by the year 1085 Leckhampton's two manors were in the possession of Leuric and Brictric. Osgot, who had been the owner of one at the time of King Edward (the Normans disregarded Harold as being a usurper) was obviously a Saxon and thus his estate was forfeit. [The site of this manor is given as Broadwell, on the opposite side of the road from Church Farm]. We know that apart from Leckhampton, Leuric also held manors in Oxford and Essex, as well as others in Gloucestershire. Brictric, owner of the second manor, seems also to have been a Saxon, and one of some note; His father was a powerful English thane, Earl Algar, and son of Lady Godiva. He was twice Earl of Anglia and then of Mercia, outlawed in 1055 and again in 1058, but each time winning back his position - obviously one of life's survivors! His death is given as 1062.

Brictric must have found favour with King William as not only did he retain his existing possessions (at least for a time) - in itself most unusual, as almost all of England was given to William's men as 'spoils of war' - but he also took over the second holding in the manor. Like Osgot, and the vast majority of the surviving Anglo-Saxon nobles who fought for Harold, Ordric forfeited his lands.

Brictric is believed to have known Duke William many years beforehand. The Continuator of Wace [?] tells a romantic tale that Mathilda seized all of his lands (which were extensive) in revenge, because in his youth he had spurned her. On her death in 1083 the lands reverted to the King and he 'when going into Normandy, granted each estate to Brictric'.

There is another version; The following is from 'History of Arle' produced by the Dowty Group, [Arle estate is said to have been

founded in the 8th century]. "About this time in English history the records of the town of Tewkesbury refer to Brictric, the last Anglo-Saxon lord of Tewkesbury, who was sent as an ambassador to the Earl of Flanders and while at the court he attracted the attentions of the Earl's daughter, Mathilde, whose offer of marriage he courteously declined. She afterwards married William, Duke of Normandy, who became William the Conqueror. Mathilde, in revenge for her wounded pride, prevailed on the King, the very day of her coronation, Christmas Day 1066, to have Brictric arrested and conveyed as a prisoner to Winchester, where he shortly after died. The King confiscated the whole of Brictric's large possessions and bestowed the Manor of Tewkesbury upon Queen Maud". The source of this interesting but confusing tale is not given. On the one hand we have the Domesday record, with Brictric retaining his extensive lands and possessions, and even being given those of the unfortunate Ordric, and of Queen Mathilde's hostility on the other, resulting in his early death. I see no way of reconciling the two accounts at present, unless there were in fact two nobles named Brictric, (which is entirely possible) connected with the district.

The most prosperous manor was that owned by Leuric, although with only three hides it seems to have been slightly the smaller of the two. The exact definition of a Saxon 'hide' is the cause of some debate but is most commonly taken to be the amount of land that would support a freeman and his family in reasonable comfort, according to the standard of the time. An average figure of 120 acres per hide has generally been agreed by historians, but in the Domesday survey the figure seems to vary from 64 acres to 240, and presumably has some bearing on the productivity of the actual land itself. A hide was a handy reference to the national land tax which was used to assess the amount of 'geld' that was paid.

Leuric possessed two teams of oxen but Brictric had only one, although his tenants owned no less than three. This gave a total of seven teams in the two manors, indicating that some 840 acres of land was under cultivation in Leckhampton. This figure excludes the two woods mentioned in the survey. (At the end of the 19C the total acreage for Leckhampton was about 1,600).

In the society of Norman England the bordars were almost at the bottom of the social scale, only serfs (slaves and bondmen - or women) were beneath them. They lived in the village and might possibly farm about five acres of land. Villeins (forming the majority of the population) were one step up the scale from bordars, farming perhaps thirty acres and owning a few plough oxen. Both villeins and bordars were tenants and would be required to render their services and that of their teams to their lord. They paid rent for their small holdings, perhaps a few pence, but the greatest part would be in their labour or in the produce they were expected to furnish.

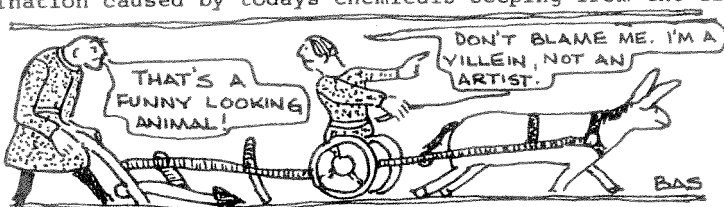
The manors of Leuric and Brictric each had their own demesne, or dwelling place, (our word 'domain' comes from this root) but each was probably looked after by an overseer. We may imagine that some form of house existed on the moated area below the church and possibly another near the site of the present Court,

although both being in such close proximity seems unlikely. The arable land in the village, comprising several large open fields, would have been divided between the two lords and the villeins and bordars who laboured in their demesne. These fields would be further divided into strips, or lynchets, the evidence of which can still be seen today on aerial photographs, or when the sun is low. In addition there was woodland for pigs and no doubt grazing land was also set aside for sheep, oxen, and other animals. Housing in the village would probably be a single storey dwelling of timber framing, in-filled with wattle and daub, and roofed with straw. Although stone was readily available from the nearby hill, wood was plentiful, and had been traditional house building material for the lower classes.

Thus we have a picture of a handful of villagers, numbering maybe less than one hundred, living in simple huts alongside their few animals, and working six days a week, either on their own land or on that of their lord. The children were expected to do their share of work, although the younger ones stayed around the homestead and perhaps looked after the geese and chickens. On the seventh day they attended religious services in their small wooden church, possibly occupying the same position that it does today. In the summer months the working day would have been long, as there was a great deal more work to be done than in winter.

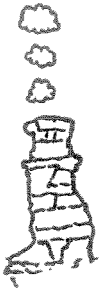
Some experts have suggested that streams were considerably larger in previous times, and if so those originating off the hills around Leckhampton could have carried a great deal more water than at present. There is reference to a stream known as 'the Pill' having a ford somewhere in the area now known as Pilford, and of the coaches splashing their way through on the journey from Bath to Cheltenham, some two hundred years ago.

No fish ponds have so far been identified, except for the moat which would almost certainly have been used for this purpose, but lacking concrete evidence as to the exact age of the site we cannot place it firmly in the Norman period. The meadow alongside the church appears to have had a stream flowing through it which might have served as a fish pond at some time. Fish would have bred naturally in the clear streams that come off the hill, as they do in the present-day Coberley mill stream, which flows from Seven Springs, although without the danger of contamination caused by today's chemicals seeping from the fields.



Leckhampton L.H.S. Annual subscription; Individual £3 Joint £4.50  
A 50p donation to funds is requested for attendance at meetings

Contributions from the members for inclusion in future editions of "Smoke Screen" will be welcomed.  
Please send them to Bruce Stait, 8 Mornington Drive, CHELTENHAM.



# smoke signal

NUMBER 2 MARCH 1993

Hon. Sec. Alison Merrett  
17 Hall Rd. Leckhampton  
Tel:- 238086

Yes, the title has been changed. 'Smoke screen' smacked too much of concealment - and we have nothing to hide! Quite the opposite in fact, as we are trying to discover and publish unknown facts concerning Leckhampton and its environs.

Individuals are encouraged to conduct enquiries into any aspect of Leckhampton's past, although it would be appreciated if members would let us know what subject they are pursuing, in order to avoid duplication. Your ideas on topics for research are always most welcome.

Rick Kedge has been looking into the history of the shop that once stood at the foot of the hill, and we are very grateful for his efforts; we are anxious to contact those villagers with memories of events in their youth, particularly of the wartime years, and anyone who can help is asked to get in touch.

I recently came across two sources for aerial photographs that might prove of interest; one is the Air Photo Unit for the RCHME at Swindon and the other the Committee for Aerial Photography at Cambridge University. Oblique and vertical shots are available from all over the country - including Leckhampton. If any member would like more details please contact me.

There has been some confusion among prospective members with regard to the question of whether they will be expected to join the various groups that are being set up to conduct research into aspects of Leckhampton history. Let me assure those people that we welcome ANYONE to the ranks of the society, and getting involved with one of the groups is not a condition of membership. Please emphasise this point when you find someone who is interested in joining our society.

Any of you will be aware of the numerous books on the subject of local history but in case you are a relative newcomer may I bring Robert Dunning's book 'Local History for Beginners' to your notice. It is one of the Phillimore publications, (who produce a great many other 'historical' books) and is probably available in the library. As its title implies it contains some useful tips particularly for those starting out in this field.

ADVANCE NOTICE JUNE 17; A 2 HOUR GUIDED WALK AROUND LECKHAMPTON. Come along and bring your friends and find out about some of the fascinating facts of the parish that may be new to you. Parts of the walk will be along footpaths which could be muddy. Meet at the church 7.0pm (bring an umbrella...)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

from Amy Woolacott

I was interested to read Major Barnard's lecture transcript in the last issue and tend to agree that the translation was his own work. This may have been the source for the same anomalies that occur in 'Leckhampton Through The Ages' by Canon Brewin and Eve Andrew.

The question of Brictric's relationship with William's wife Mathilde may perhaps be answered by the fact that in my copy of Domesday for Glo'shire (translated by John S. Moore) there are two nobles named Brictric. Incidentally I believe the name comes from Saxon sorces - 'rich Briton'. [Amy, I hope you have some backing for this - it's not quite April 1st yet. Ed.]

Following the various references of Brictric through the book is not straightforward but summarises as follows:-

The one, described as the King's Thane (a kind of military companion) was a Saxon who held half of the Leckhampton manor before 1066, and was eventually given the other two hides. (It is interesting to note that Ordric, the Saxon who lost two hides to Brictric, was apparently compensated for this by the Bishop of Worcester, who granted him lands at Eycot in Bibury hundred).

The second Saxon Brictric is listed as son of Algar, with lands in the Tewkesbury area and other parts of the county - largely owned by the church in William's time. This Brictric [much the more powerful of the two] was the friend to Mathilde.

Another anomaly appears concerning the entry for Leckhampton's second manor, belonging to William Leuric/Leofric. From the Domesday record he held (in addition to Leckhampton) land at Hailes, Whittington, Shipton [Oliffe] and [Lower] Turkdean, but there is another Leuric with lands in Hereford and Oxfordshire which were given to William's victorious nobles.

According to the Domesday translators the second manor can be identified as Broadwell, and it is my own view that Broadwell was associated with the moated site. [Major Barnard put forward the supposition that 'the moat' may have been Leckhampton's first settlement in prehistoric times. Ed.] The other manor was of course the present court. It is sometimes found in villages that manors grew to the East and West of the church site.

## A PUZZLE FOR YOU TO SOLVE.

On Jan 21st David Bick gave a most interesting talk about the Gloucester and Cheltenham Tramway, and its extension to the Leckhampton Hill quarries, and answered a number of questions. The old tramway that carried stone off the hill has long gone, but by the Norwood pub there are two short lengths of rail in the pavement, about twenty yards apart, that are sometimes confused with the old tramway track. They are too close together to have been part of that system and I wonder if they have some connection with the pub that is not apparent today. The Norwood Arms was once a brewery, were these rails part of the delivery system for barrels? Another school of thought says they may have been part of the roof to the underground toilets in that area.

If you look carefully at the pavement on the west side of Leckhampton Road, just past the railway bridge you will see two parallel cracks in the tarmac that are exactly the same width apart as the rails once were (1.1m).

A recent check with a metal detector showed no sign of them still being in situ, which seems to indicate that the subsoil has shifted, leaving these cracks. David Bick stated that the track was lifted and sold for scrap more than 100 years ago.

#### HILL STORES. by Rick Kedge

Since moving to Leckhampton seven years ago I have heard tales of the shop that once stood at the foot of the hill. I never saw it myself but I have a copy of an old postcard which shows the shop in the early years of the century, and friends have given me their reminiscences, so I have a good impression of what it must have been like. Since writing these few lines I have been given a copy of a much more recent photograph, taken in about 1962, with a Leckhampton bus standing outside, showing the shop after it was altered.

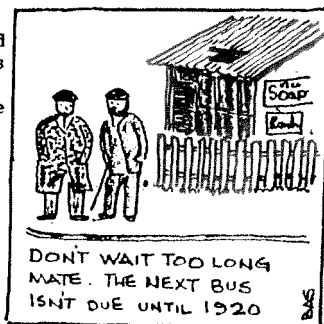
The brick building is marked on the Ordnance Survey map of 1887 and may have originally been either a chapel or shrine. The date when it began to be used as a shop is unknown, but another postcard dated 1905 does not show any conversion. The old horse-drawn omnibus service which only ran as far as the Malvern Inn ceased in 1903 and a new extension to the Cheltenham tramway network that terminated just below the foot of the hill opened in 1905. No doubt this provided a marked increase in the number of customers and could have coincided with the establishment of the shop. Next door was a cobbler's shop, run in latter years by Mr. Lacey, but by about 1960 his shop was showing signs of age and was closed for several months while repairs were carried out. A new frontage was added with 'Tuck Shop' over the top, and when Mr. Lacey retired in about 1963 it became a storeroom.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Keen rented 'Hill Stores' at £1 per week from a Mr. Stanbridge between 1963 and 1974, and told me of the latter years of the business.

Mrs. Keen, who passed her driving test at the age of 64, used to load up her Austin A40 at Laxton's Cash and Carry in Princess Elizabeth Way to stock the shop, and then made up the weekly orders placed by customers on the hill. General groceries on sale were sugar, margarine, butter, flour, eggs, matches, aspirin, laces, and fresh fruit and vegetables, and customers regularly came from as far away as Birdlip.

Walkers and ramblers were particularly grateful for the shop, and at weekends and bank holidays they would arrive by the bus load. Not only the passengers stopped off for supplies but the bus crews also became regulars and friends of the Keen's. At busy times the queues stretched for fifty yards and around the corner into the Old Bath Road!

After a good days walk over the hill most people wanted a drink, usually Tizer



Corona or Fanta - and a Wall's ice cream. Also very popular were the home-made cakes that Mrs.Keen provided. The corner became a popular meeting point, with a telephone and letter box and two benches, where folk could have a quiet chat while waiting for the next No.3 bus to arrive.

On Easter Monday 1973 a coach taking a party from Tamworth to Stonehenge stopped on the hill, the brakes faded and it ran back into the side of the shop, demolishing the post box and a sign 'Welcome to Cheltenham' in the process. No one was injured but Mrs.Keen was in the shop at the time and the 'Echo' took pictures.

The introduction of V.A.T. and S.E.T. in the early 1970's meant a lot of extra paperwork and as both Mr. and Mrs. Keen were then in their early 70's they decided to call it a day. The shop was taken over by Mr.and Mrs.Wilkinson who broadened the stock of groceries and introduced a range of frozen foods, increasing the turnover considerably.

Mr.Wilkinson tells me that Sunday was by far the busiest day of the week, as they were the only local shop to open. However, during the four years of their tenancy the shop was broken into three times and it was hit by at least two cars. They gave it up in 1978, Mr.Stanbridge died and the new owner sold the site for development. A bulldozer moved in and a small and tearful crowd watched as it cleared the ground, knocking down the shop and uncovering an adder's nest in the process.

But at least Hill Stores went out with a bang, as there was a minor explosion when a gas pipe was fractured !

G.M.Trevelyan, a noted historian who died 30 years ago, had this vision of the past, and I believe it puts into words something that all of us must have pondered at some time;

'The poetry of history lies in the quasi-miraculous fact that once, on this earth, once, on this familiar spot of ground, walked other men and women, as actual as we are today, thinking their own thoughts, swayed by their own passions, but now all gone, one generation vanishing after another, gone utterly as we ourselves shall shortly be gone, like ghosts at cock-crow.'

Let us get as much as possible recorded of Leckhampton before the cock crows for us! I was reminded of this when I saw the recent death of Mollie Smith (nee Cotton) who will be remembered with affection by many. She was born in 1898 in Moored Road, and spent the greater part of her life in the village, being actively involved in many aspects of Leckhampton life. She was the first woman to be elected to the Parish Council and was also a founder member of the Evening WI. Our sincere condolences to her family.

Members are encouraged to bring visitors to our meetings, and the usual donation of 50p is requested.

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NUMBER 3 June 1993

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THE WAY WE WERE - June 1934 by John Randall

I recently acquired a copy of the Bradshaw Railway Guide for 1934 and members may be interested in the timetable for trains through Leckhampton - also known as CHELTENHAM SOUTH.

Two companies ran trains through the station; the Great Western Railway on the former Banbury/Cheltenham line, with trains from Cheltenham ST.JAMES to Kingham and Banbury, and the Southern Railway on the former Midland and South West Junction Railway, with trains from Cheltenham LANSDOWN to Andover and Southampton. In addition there were several 'through trains' from other railway companies, but there were no Sunday trains.

## DOWN TRAINS - WEEKDAYS

FROM	LECK. a.m.	TO
ST.JAMES	6.38	BANBURY
ST.JAMES	8.09	KINGHAM *
LANSDOWN	10.35	SOUTHAMPTON
ST.JAMES	10.44	KINGHAM
SWANSEA	11.16	NEWCASTLE
	p.m.	
ST.JAMES	12.18	KINGHAM *
LIVERPOOL	1.40	SOUTHAMPTON
LANSDOWN	3.11	ANDOVER
ST.JAMES	3.26	KINGHAM *
ST.JAMES	7.14	KINGHAM
LANSDOWN	7.26	ANDOVER

## UP TRAINS - WEEKDAYS

FROM	LECK. a.m.	TO
BANBURY	9.23	ST.JAMES
ANDOVER	10.48	LANSDOWN
	p.m.	
S'TON	1.09	LIVERPOOL
KINGHAM *	2.03	ST.JAMES
KINGHAM	3.06	ST.JAMES
NEWCASTLE	4.59	SWANSEA
ANDOVER	5.12	LANSDOWN
KINGHAM	5.54	ST.JAMES
S'TON	8.03	LANSDOWN
BANBURY	9.39	ST.JAMES

(\* 'LONDON TRAINS')

Various regular goods trains of different sorts also used the line - approx 9 Down workings and 8 Up workings - although most of them were not scheduled to stop. As far as Leckhampton was concerned the main goods trains, where the yard was shunted, were the Down (arr. 3.34pm dep. 4.10pm having called at Leckhampton Sand Sidings at 3.21pm) and the Up (arr. 10.56am dep. 11.25am).

Other 'Special' trains worked the line, 'Race Specials' to and from Cheltenham and Summer Excursions to Barry Island for instance, and there were also 'diverted' trains from other lines. Of course this is not claimed to be a complete picture of the day to day workings of Leckhampton Station and no doubt other members will be able to supply further information in due course.

*LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY*

'A Cheltenham Companion' - by Alwyn Sampson and Steven Blake  
This is the title of a recently published soft-cover book containing a miscellany of facts about the town. Highly recommended with a wealth of information and a selection of excellent drawings from the pen of Alwyn Sampson. The price is £5 with all profits to Sue Ryder Home and the Cobalt Appeal. As this is a very limited print run I imagine that most will soon be snapped up. They are on sale at the museum.

Rick Kedge has recently obtained a few copies of two books that members may find of interest; they are both connected with the coach firm of Swanbrook, the one celebrating their 25 years as a company is lavishly illustrated, some in colour, and the other a personal story of the founder, Billy Thomas. The cost is £3 for the pair and should appeal to a wide circle, especially transport enthusiasts. Give Rick a ring on Chelt.572003.

There has been very little feedback from members on the topics we raised in the last 'Smoke Signal' - well, none at all actually. Has no one got any theories on the use of the metal rails in the pavement by the 'Norwood'?

#### VISIT TO GLOUCESTER RECORD OFFICE

A group of 23 members made their way to the CRO on April 27th to hear the 'how and why' on a county's records, initially from Mrs. Kate Haslam and then from a video film. We were told how information can be retrieved from documents by having an understanding of how the records are kept which was followed with a conducted tour of the offices, first to the climatically controlled map room and then to see some of the oddities and catastrophes which find their way to the observation room. Later we heard about the mammoth task of committing to computer data storage all currently held records. Our final treat was to see a few of the numerous documents about Leckhampton which had been set out on tables and the visit ended with a vote of thanks to the staff of the CRO who took the time to prepare and present a most interesting evening.

#### NEWS FROM THE RESEARCH GROUPS

John Randall and Bruce Stait have spent many hours at the Record Office copying two maps of the parish, the Enclosure Award map of 1778 (10" to the mile) and the other Croome's map of 1835. These are currently being updated to include footpaths and will be used for study by the map research group.

A fairly common map of Leckhampton - and one that was shown to the members who recently visited the Record Office - is the one prepared at the time of the disposal of much of the Court Estate on Oct. 31st 1894. Several copies are known to exist, at least two in the hands of members of the LHS. There is also the sale catalogue which makes fascinating reading. 285 acres were sold in 24 lots, including a number of oldish cottages in Church Road and off Kidnappers Lane and land in the parish. This sale of quarries and land on the hill was ultimately responsible for the riots of

1910; the building of houses on the North side of Church Road also took place after the sale.

From a look at the Census Returns for 1891 it is possible to verify the names of the owners and the remaining members of the household. Here are just a few of the various lots that went under the hammer:

Lot 2. Moat Cottage; let to Frank Hicks, occ. by John Williams, a farm servant.

Lot 7. 3 cottages; [adjoining Collum End Farm - two cottages are now the home of Bill and Mavis Reynolds] occupied in 1894 by Benjamin Addiman (described in the catalogue as a vellum binder but in 1891 census he was a 'furniture packer'), Thomas Hawker and Will Hawker (both of them were labourers but Will was a 'platelayer' in 1891). [Hawker is one of the ancient Leckhampton family names].

Lot 17. Cottage; [known as Cromwell Cottage] occupied by Charles Hawker. In 1891 census it appears that Charles was 'foreman/coal wharve' and was residing at Church Farm.

Lot 12. Post office [probably comes in Cheltenham census as it was on the corner of Church Road and Hall Road]

A great deal of information can be discovered from the Census; microfilms of all years up to 1891 are available at Cheltenham library but normally you will have to book ahead as the readers are usually fully utilised.

An illustration of some well-known Leckhampton names comes from a pantomime of around 1910, performed in the parish hall

"Leckhampton has long been renowned for its hill,  
And the church and the famous old court,  
But its people deserve to be more famous still,  
For they're all of the very best sort.  
Some have lived here so long that you'll not be far wrong,  
If you thought they'd come straight from the Ark,  
And I fancy when Noah first opened the door,  
They stepped out while he passed this remark.  
"There's Townsend and Hawker, there's Greening and Bubb,  
With Barretts in goodly array.  
There's Cherrington, Caudle, Cotton and Chick,  
Ballinger, Harding, Harper and Hicks,  
You shall stay in Leckhampton today".

The postcard research group has made a good start with getting a catalogue of Leckhampton postcards together, the total so far stands at over 200. Not all of these are original as a few have been copied from those held in the Gloucester Record Office and others in the Cheltenham Museum Collection. The vast majority are of the Devil's Chimney but there are also some of the trams and buses in Leckhampton Road. If anyone has any cards tucked away in old family albums the group would be pleased to see them. One name that occurs on many postcards of the period around 1900 is that of F.A. Webley. In the 'Cheltenham Annuaire 1910' (the forerunner of 'Kellys Directory') a copy of which may be seen in the public library, he is recorded as a photographer with an address at Commerce House in Leckhampton Road. I have not

been able to establish where this was (or is) but nearby properties were given as Florizel, Culham (maybe another spelling for Collum), Villa Gazilda and Glencariff. The latter still exists a short distance down from the Co-op. Commerce House may have been re-named or demolished to make way for more modern property or perhaps it stood on the Co-op site itself. The same directory lists Collum End Road (now Church Road) as 'or Leckhampton Lane'.

Apart from the two evening meetings scheduled for June 17th (a walk round Leckhampton, start at the church at 7.00p.m.) and the other on July 15th referred to below, the first season of the society is over. We will be in touch with you all before the start of our second season but in the meantime we wish you all a pleasant summer and look forward to meeting once again in the autumn.

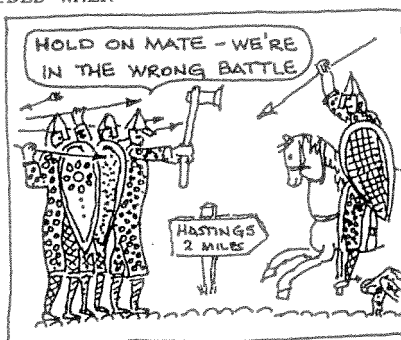
#### THE HISTORY OF ST.PETER'S CHURCH

At the final meeting of the first year of the LHS a good turnout of members were privileged to hear a most fascinating account of the history of Leckhampton Church given by Eric Miller, accompanied with slides, on May 20th. Although almost all of us must have thought they knew everything about the church, Eric confounded us with the depth of his knowledge and the many interesting snippets of information he had acquired, brought out with close-up photographs of various features. I imagine that we will now be taking a much closer look at the Church when next we are in that vicinity!

His thoroughly researched booklet covering the church through the ages was in great demand after the meeting; copies are available in the church itself price £1.50.

#### TEWKESBURY GUIDED WALK

Members are reminded that an evening walk has been arranged to take in the site of the Battle of Tewkesbury, conducted by some local members of the 'Wars of the Roses Society'. They will show us the location of various actions, dressed in period costumes, so don't forget to bring your camera. Meet at the Abbey Gate at 6.45pm on Thursday JULY 15th. The cost is £1 per head. Bring your friends and give Bruce Stait a ring if you need a lift.



Leckhampton L.H.S. Annual subscription; Individual £3 Joint £4.50

Contributions from the members for inclusion in future editions of "Smoke Signal" are always welcomed. Please send them to; Bruce Stait, 8 Mornington Drive, CHELTENHAM. Tel:517488



# smoke signal

NUMBER 4 SEPTEMBER 1993

Hon.Sec. Alison Merrett

17 Hall Rd. Leckhampton

Tel:- 238086

One of the wartime memories of those who lived in Leckhampton during that period was of the Prisoner of War camp, located in the grounds of the Court. In 1992 Bruce Stait was put in touch with a man living locally who had actually 'done his time' as an inmate.

Karl Wolf was a sergeant engineer who served with Infantry Regiment 84 of the German Army, mainly in connection with the development of anti-tank warfare, seeing action on several fronts, including Russia. He was captured during the last week in April 1945, a few days before the European war ended, and arrived in England with practically nothing apart from his clothes, everything else having been 'liberated' by his American captors. Eventually he found himself in POW camp number 263 at Leckhampton Court.

There were some 250 prisoners altogether, from all sections of the German armed forces, including a small number from the S.S. They were billeted in 20 Nissen huts - a few of the concrete bases can still be seen - and the English guards occupied rooms in the Court, where the C.O. was Colonel Lamprey. Because he had a good command of English Karl became 'Camp Leader' and it was part of his duty to act as spokesman between the camp guards and the German prisoners. Col. Lamprey frequently visited the ten or so other nearby POW camps at Elkstone, Brockworth (where there was a bakery), and Northleach (a few POW's were housed in the old prison), and Karl used to accompany him.

The POW's were employed on local farms, and although they received no payment for their services they had plastic tokens which could be used in the camp canteen to obtain small items. On one occasion Karl was privately approached by Mr. Williams who ran Vineries market garden in Kidnappers Lane, to help out with cutting and planting lettuces. Karl negotiated a price of 2/- an hour and received 17/6 when he'd finished, which he placed in a tin and carefully buried it near the wall by the side of the church. But when he returned some time later his treasure had vanished - someone had obviously seen him!

Fraternisation was initially frowned upon, but eased as time went by. Karl recalled that one of the loose stones in the wall of Collum End Farm, fronting on to Church Road, was sometimes used as a two-way 'letter box' for village romances.

Eventually visits outside the camp were permitted and the POW's became a familiar sight in the town. The camp boasted its own orchestra, with instruments made by the prisoners, and on occasions concerts were given in the Parish Hall, with Karl acting as compere. One of the huts was used as a chapel and local residents have recalled the beautiful singing that was heard from within. On at least one occasion they also performed

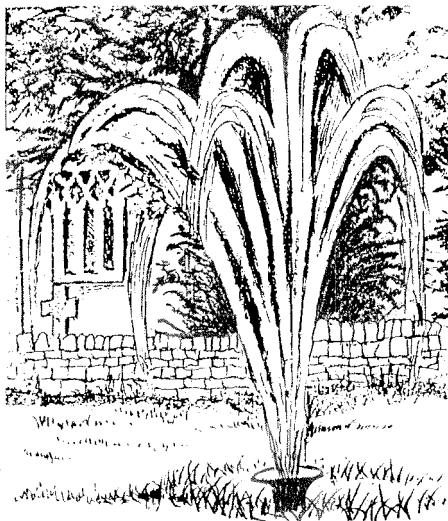
in the Town Hall, and memories of the singing of one of the POW's who had been a pre-war professional has lingered to this day.

The long months of waiting were ended towards the end of 1947 when repatriation began and in 1948 the camp was closed; five of those in the camp are believed to have stayed in England and married English girls. In 1955 Karl built his house in Charlton Kings occupying 1/5 acre, with a loan of £50 from a coal merchant named Jones, and today spends much of his leisure time tending a truly immaculate garden.

Archie Kirkham, now living in Mead Road, had a small plot of ground by the old rifle range behind what is now 'Old Farthing', adjoining the POW camp. He struck up a friendship with one of the young POW's named Willi Smitke who was something of a footballer and Archie sought permission from the camp CO to take him out occasionally. Almost fifty years later they still maintain contact, indeed in 1991 Willi (a keen Wimbledon tennis fan) came over and stayed with Archie for a time.

Apart from the concrete bases, little remains of the POW camp at Leckhampton, although a fountain made by the prisoners may still be seen, not far from the church boundary.

Jean Bendall has three fine pencil sketches produced by Kurt Ilzmann, an inmate from the camp, one of which shows this fountain in action. No photographs have so far come to light but it is hoped that some might still be located in private hands. A search through copies of the post-war 'Echo' would probably turn up several references to the presence of prisoners of war in the area. Any surviving official records are almost certainly held in the Public Record Office at Kew.



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The two evening walks arranged for the summer months went ahead despite uncertain weather conditions on both occasions.

About twenty hardy souls, led by Bruce Stait, turned up to traverse a few of the many public footpaths in Leckhampton on June 17th, starting from the car park by the church and heading out via the 'lost road' behind the cottages in Farm Lane. The light rain which fell at the start soon finished and the rest of the walk was quite pleasant. A stop was made at various points to discuss old features of the parish and concluded after viewing the new development of Leckhampton Farm which was almost complete. Surprisingly, even though many of the walkers were 'locals' they found some of these field paths were unknown territory.

The second walk on July 15th was around the Battle Trail in Tewkesbury, ably conducted by two members of the 'Companions of the Bear and Ragged Staff Society'. Halfway round the tour our party had the misfortune to fall into an ambush arranged by others of the society, dressed in period costumes and firing a feaseome early form of handgun but luckily there were no casualties. For anyone with an interest in the Wars of the Roses this was an evening not too be missed, yet disappointingly only a handful attended.

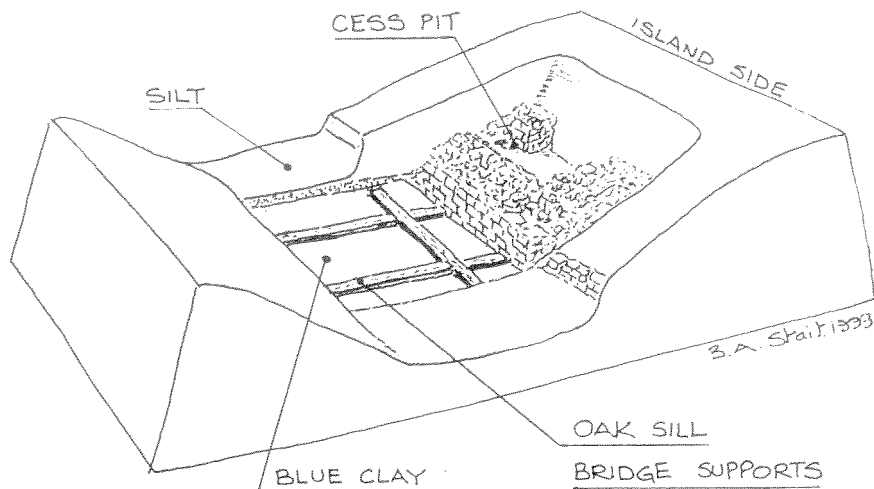
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Peter Smith has told us of the recent research he has done on the North Gloucestershire Golf Course that used to exist on land adjoining Crippets Lane. Apparently it was constructed about 1911 and continued in use until the early 1920's. A copy of the Cheltenham Chronicle shows several photographs taken in April 1914 when an exhibition match was held to celebrate the opening of the 'reconstructed' Golf Club house, now the home of another of our members, the Brauholtz family. Peter intends to delve a bit deeper into the subject and would welcome any further information.

\*\*\*\*\*

The programme for the second season of the society has been arranged and will be available shortly. One of the items that I am sure members will find of interest is the talk on Liddington Lake by John Milner, on October 28th.

A little later Terry Moore-Scott will speak about Leckhampton's archaeology, and in particular the excavations of the Moat that took place exactly sixty years ago, in the summer of 1933. The sketch below shows the excellent model produced at the time, the property of Cheltenham Museum, which is to the scale 1/4" = 1ft.



\* Not the historian. R.C.Henlow Barnard was his son.

One of those involved with the dig was R.C.H.Barnard, well-known Leckhampton historian, assisted by Lt.COL.J.D.Blyth; because of research I did when compiling the Rotol history I was aware of the latter because of a story I was told that during the second world war he became a member of the Rotol Home Guard, where he was always referred to as Private Colonel Blyth.

\*\*\*\*\*

Kidnappers Lane (referred to on some maps as Greenway Lane) has been a source of much speculation over the years, conjuring up all manner of fascinating and scary stories but Mr.Robert Moss, well-known as the ex-editor of the Brownie and Guide annuals who has lived in the Lane for many years, speculates that it derives its name from the ancient art of napping - working leather to ensure it is supple. Young goats or kids would be used to produce soft leather gloves and other garments. (Shakespeare's father was a glove maker). Perhaps kid-napping was done in this area in years gone by. It is unlikely that any direct connection can be made but in the 1881 census return for Leckhampton Benjamin Addiman, who lived in the cottage by Collum End Farm, gave his trade as 'Vellum Binder; unemployed'.

\*\*\*\*\*

The question of the use to which the metal rails in the pavement by the 'Norwood' were put (see Smoke Signal No.2) continues to occupy our attention. Terry Moore-Scott has been looking into it in more detail.

The Borough Planning Officer responded to his enquiry with a map of the area and although it does not show this particular feature it does show the location of the weigh-bridge which was in the road outside the present garden irrigation suppliers shop. In the absence of firm information I am still inclined to the view that these rails formed some part of the brewery that once occupied the site, although the possibility of them being used in the underground public toilets roof to support the glass ceiling lights cannot be ruled out completely.

\*\*\*\*\*

Members are urged to attend the First Annual General Meeting of the Society on September 30th, details of which are contained in a separate sheet.

A 50p donation to funds is made for attendance at all meetings. Members are encouraged to bring visitors and the usual donation of 50p is requested.

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# smoke signal

NUMBER 5 DECEMBER 1993

Hon. Sec. Alison Merrett  
17 Hall Rd. Leckhampton  
Tel:- 238086

1894 - 1994

Next year will see the 100th anniversary of one of the most far-reaching changes in Leckhampton, the selling-off of much of the Court Estate, thus ending centuries of feudal tradition in the village. It was following this sale that the building of the houses on the North side of Church Road took place; the sale also led to the confrontation with Dale over public rights on the Hill itself, and the subsequent riots.

In order to ensure the occasion is suitably recorded the LHS are proposing to undertake a thorough survey based on the results of these changes and to publish a booklet of their findings, to be on sale before the end 1994. All this will require a great deal of help from the members and will probably serve as a good introduction to newcomers into researching the various records of the period. (Unfortunately the County Record Office is currently undergoing an extensive re-building programme and will not be available for research until early in January).

The starting point is the sale catalogue and map of the Court Estate (285 acres were sold in 24 lots) and the subsequent development of the various plots but there are a good many other aspects of life in the Parish that must be addressed.

The members evening held on Nov.18th discussed this venture at some length and the idea received universal approval. Several people volunteered to look into the local papers held in the Public Library Reference Section in order to establish what happened in Leckhampton around the period. Tom Hewlett undertook to liaise with the volunteers in order to ensure that work on this most important source was not duplicated.

It was stressed that although we are using 1894 as our central date, it is inevitable that events that took place outside this period will also feature in the booklet and it was suggested that a thorough search up to at least 1900 would have to be made.

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LIDDINGTON LAKE - report from Barbara Janes

John Milner opened the new season in fine style with a most interesting talk on this popular but little-known subject.

Towards the end of the last century several factors led to the development of Liddington Lake Pleasure gardens, situated next to the old Leckhampton station, where clay pits left from recent brickworks had been adapted.

At the turn of the century much new housing was going up in the area, the cult of the open-air was growing and the northern side

*LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY*

of Cheltenham was already provided with several recreational open spaces but the southern side lacked amenities.

In 1893 both the Naunton Park Public Recreation Ground and Liddington Lake (a private development) were opened and an entry charge for the latter was two pence, which included a trip on one of the two steam boats. The lake had an island, and a boathouse at its western end, and farther along the owner's house served refreshments (non-alcoholic) at moderate charges. Boats could be hired and there were children's swings. On special holidays various competitive events were organised, canoe races, climbing the greasy pole and the like, mainly for boys under 16. As the water was reputed to be only three feet deep there was little danger. On one Bank Holiday in 1894 a total of 1,700 turned up to sample the delights of this new venture. The Pleasure Gardens were generally open from 1st April until 1st November but when the lake froze over skating was available.

For reasons that are not entirely clear the Gardens were put up for auction in 1912 but failed to reach the reserve price of £750. Four or five years later Mr. James, a local butcher, bought the site and while he lived in the house the lake was filled in.

John Milner showed several slides of the Gardens, mainly from rare post cards of the period, and copies of advertisements from a local paper 'The Messenger'. He concluded with colour slides of the present day house, sitting in the middle of a commercial development with little signs of either Liddington Lake or the island. (According to a local tale a bomb fell in the grounds during the 1939-1945 war, causing the summer house to turn right round - editor). Altogether a most enjoyable evening, given to a capacity audience at our new venue, Church House. This has proved to be more popular with our members than the Sue Ryder Home, and has attracted several newcomers.

\*\*\*\*\*

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members:-

Eric Lipson, Anne Haussherr, Margaret Heaven, Rosemary Smart, Penelope Hall, Valerie Plinston, Pat Lawrence.

\*\*\*\*\*

In 1957 the Leckhampton Women's Institute, as part of a national competition, produced a history of Leckhampton dating from about 1850 entitled 'Within Living Memory'. It was compiled by many members although Mollie Clark (Betty Jones' late mother) was its main contributor and editor.

When reading the following, which is just a short section from the complete work, please bear in mind that it was written some forty years ago. Your editor has added comments thus [ ].

#### SOCIAL LIFE IN LECKHAMPTON.

Records show that most of the social activities of the period we are covering took place in the school, and in the words of the folk then concerned, 'we made our own fun'. There was also a room in Moorend Road that was used for Mother's Meetings, and also as

a Reading Room and Library. A notice to this effect remained on the boards at the railway bridge in Leckhampton Road for many years. This same room was also at one time the headquarters for the local scouts. The site is today occupied by an electricity transformer.

One lady of over eighty, when asked what she did in her young days for recreation replied, 'We went to Band of Hope', and it is reasonable to assume that recreation as we know it today was unheard of in those days.

The Parish Hall, now used by most of the local organisations, was built in 1897-1901 and was the outcome of much endeavour and hard work for those who planned and raised funds for its construction. Its opening made social life of all kinds possible. Canon Proctor with Captain L.Sharpe started the Church Lads' Brigade, and Captain L.W.Barnard and Mr. Arthur Jenkins the scouts. The Girls Drill Club was begun by Miss C.S.Barnard and Miss H.Bourne the sewing and knitting classes for G.F.S. members. The rector, churchwardens and three others are the trustees and over the years much voluntary work has been done to maintain the hall, in order to keep the hire charge as nominal as possible.

The fine ornamental iron gates and the gas lamp above the door were made by William Letheren, the owner of the Vulcan Ironworks in St.Marks, at a cost of £34.10s. [Over the years the gates to the Parish Hall have deteriorated and in 1992 they were refurbished by Don Biddle]. Examples of other work from this firm can be seen locally, including a large chancel screen at All Saints Church, entrance gates at Arle Court and St.Gregory's, and the balusters of the staircase in the Town Hall.

One of the highlights of the winter of 1909 was the first Leckhampton pantomime, with a script entirely in rhyme by Mr. and Miss Barnard, and complete with orchestral music. Many productions followed and since the end of the Second World War this form of entertainment has been revived by the Leckhampton Players. [Don and Veronica Biddle are leading lights at present and have records of the Players dating back to its beginning in 1947].

In earlier days, the small room in the Parish Hall (now used as a kitchen) was once a lending library, started by Miss Trye, and continued by the misses Walker, Hicks, and Duckworth. With the passing of time, the books became old and too expensive to replace and they were donated to start a school library.

Among the organisations using the hall today are the Mothers' Union, the Young Wives' Club, the Adult Badminton Club, two Women's Institutes (the first was formed in 1947, with a present membership of 175) and a very well organised Welfare Centre. A hut, once part of the prisoner of war camp at Leckhampton Court was put in the grounds adjacent to the hall at the end of the Second World War, for use by the Guides and Brownies and other youth activities.

[The Parish Hall has been used for a great many purposes during its life, not all of which have been recorded. One little known fact is the use made of it by the POW's at Leckhampton Court, who formed an orchestra using instruments they had made themselves and staged concerts there in the years just after the Second World War].

During the Second World War the hall was used as a Blood Transfusion Centre, when many local donors contributed, and also sewing and knitting parties were held to produce garments for SSAFA, the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmens Families Association, when as many as 80 women were present.

The first record of the formation of the village football team was in 1895, and the cricket club followed in 1903. Matches were played on a field at Leckhampton Court initially but on April 30th 1910 the playing field behind the school was officially opened by Mr.C.H.Margrett, Mayor of Cheltenham. In 1919 both the football and cricket clubs amalgamated under the chairmanship of Mr.Frank Fisher and took the name by which it is known today, 'The Leckhampton Sports Club'. Over the years many social events have been arranged and in 1955 the club organised a fete, which has since become an annual event.

The Working Men's Club had a rifle range, with also a ladies team, taught by Mr.Robert Cotton, [The range was in a building at the rear of the property now known as 'Old Farthing'] and during the Second World War the local Home Guard practised on this range, and were 'ever ready'.

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#### Chairmans Message - John Randall

At a recent meeting of the committee it was decided to include a regular column from the chairman - so here goes;

It hardly seems possible that more than 18 months have already passed since we took the first tentative steps towards forming a Local History Society and here we are, after a very successful first season, with a quarterly newsletter firmly established and a flourishing membership. We have made contact with various other societies and organisations and intend to increase their number as time goes by, hopefully to our mutual benefit.

My one regret is that we have not had more success in getting the research groups working independently on a regular basis but we are looking into this problem and hope to have more news soon.

The programme for 1994 and 1995 is under consideration and we would be grateful for any subjects or speakers that members could suggest. Please give it some serious thought and let the chairman have your suggestions. (It maybe that some members might feel they themselves would be able to provide a 'mini-talk' at some future date, lasting perhaps half-an-hour).

Lastly, as the festive season approaches may I wish each one of you a Merry Christmas and a Peaceful and Happy New Year.

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# smoke signal

NUMBER 6 MARCH 1994

Hon. Sec. Alison Merrett  
17 Hall Rd. Leckhampton  
Tel:- 238086

Our very first Christmas social, held on Dec.16th, was generally agreed to have been a great success, judging by the 38 who attended. Unfortunately, due to the clash of other functions, or having succumbed to the various ailments associated with this time of year, some members were prevented from being present.

The excellent catering arrangements were in the capable hands of Daphne Wheeler (despite herself being by no means 100% on the day) and her willing band of helpers, all of whom contributed to the efficient and smooth running operation, with Roger Richards coping ably as barman. A number of quiz games, devised by the committee, taxed the guests and provoked much good-natured comment, and John Randall showed a pilot programme of 'Then and Now' slides of Leckhampton. It is hoped that this pleasant social occasion will be the forerunner of many in the society.

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## WHAT'S IN A NAME ? by Eric Miller

The technique of studying placenames is an inexact science and often little more than guesswork. This is especially true of settlements such as Leckhampton, which had its origin in Saxon times, and for which there is no surviving record of the original spelling.

Many people must have wondered, 'What does the name Leckhampton mean' and what follows is an attempt to piece together the most likely explanation in the opinion of some experts.

Leckhampton is known to have been one of the habitations in the Cheltenham Hundred as early as the mid-8th century, along with a labourers' settlement at Charlton (Churl-ton, Old English Ceorl-tun) and a pig farm at Swindon (Swinedown). Leckhampton would have been the home farm (OE ham-tun) devoted mainly to growing vegetables. These were not necessarily leeks (or onions) exclusively, although we must bear in mind that the range of root crops available to dwellers in the British Isles in those days was much more restricted than today.

'Leck' with this meaning is unusual in English placenames. The only other ones I can find are Leckhampstead (in both Berks and Bucks) and corruptions of Leac-tun, which appear as Langton, Latton, Leighton and Letton. Other likely-sounding places, including Leek (Staffs) itself, Lechlade (Glos) and Leckford (Hants) all turn out to be derived from Laecc, meaning 'brook' or 'bog', and are unrelated. R.C. Barnard in his 'Records of Leckhampton' (1897) suggested the latter derivation and meaning, but more recent experts favour 'leek', the vegetable.

Samuel Rudder, in 'A new history of Gloucestershire' suggested

that 'Leck' might be from Lech, meaning stone. However, this is a flat stone, as in 'cromlech', which is improbable as a description of Leckhampton Hill's escarpment, and the word is Celtic and does not sit easily with the Saxon 'hampton'.

The village's name has been spelt in a variety of ways; Lechantone (in Domesday Book 1086), Leachampton, Laghampton, Leihamptone, Leckanton, Lechanetone and Lekanton, although Lekynton, Leckington and Lekington may also be found.

The last variations are of some interest. This alternative spelling (presumably with the stress on the first syllable?) was in common use from at least the 13th century (1287 Leckinton Manor) and an 1835 poster advertising the beating of the bounds was headed 'LECKHAMPTON, otherwise LACKINGTON'. Even in the 1920s and 1930s that usage must have been current, as illustrated by remarks in the Parish Magazines. Rumpelstiltskin, the pantomime of 1922, 'gladdened the hearts of the folk of Lackington'. More recently Mr. E.H.Parsons, a former headmaster of Leckhampton School, on retiring in 1932 to Kingston-on-Thames, named his house there 'Leckington'.

I wonder if any of our present day readers can recall hearing or even using that form of our name?

\*\*\*\*\*

Readers of 'Smoke Signal 5' were interested in 'Within Living Memory' - the Leckhampton W.I. history of 1957, a small part of which was published in the last edition. Here is a further sample; I repeat my earlier remark, please bear in mind that it was written some forty years ago. Your editor has added comments thus [ ]. As you will see it contains many references to 1894 which should prove most useful when we compile our own history celebrating the centenary of the Court's sale.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Local Government Act was adopted in Leckhampton parish on the 6th of February 1873 and in the following April the first local board was established, with the Rev.Canon Trye as chairman. Previous to this time the authorities were the Badgeworth Highway Board, which included the parish of Leckhampton.

Gas Lighting Inspectors were appointed in 1861, the parish first being lighted by gas in 1862. Every winter afternoon the lamplighter, with his long stick and a top hat, would light each lamp, returning the next morning to turn them out. The only form of lighting prior to this was by 'hurricane' lamps, three being placed outside the church each Sunday. The question of providing more lamps was raised at a parish meeting in 1896 but because the annual cost would be an additional twelve shillings per lamp, the idea was dropped. Electricity first came to the village in 1912 but it was not until 1951 that Church Road was completely lit by electricity. The cost of lighting 122 lamps on the Woodlands estate in 1956 was quoted as £7 per lamp per year.

The Leckhampton Sewer Authority was established in 1872, under whose direction the main sewers were laid. The water course was re-piped in Leckhampton Lane (now Church Road) in 1905 at a cost

of £15. The provision of tapped water was perhaps the greatest blessing for the old cottagers. We are told that one of the cottages on the hill had a spring in the garden and although a bath was kept from which the water was used for all household purposes, the kettle was always filled direct from the spring. A well-known spring and trough also stood in the Old Bath Road, and Cheltenham folk often filled a bottle to take home, believing it to be a certain cure for many ailments.

In 1894, the gift of a handsome drinking fountain was given by Mr. Taunton for the use of horses, dogs, and humans, and erected at the end of Church Road, where it adjoins the main road. It was lighted the following year, the cost being defrayed voluntarily. It is only in quite recent times that it has been removed. [Does anyone have knowledge of its present whereabouts ?]

The first Parish Meeting (replacing the old vestry meetings) was held on 4th December 1894 and Mr. G. B. Witts [of Hill House] was its first chairman. The Annual Meeting of 1897 recorded the acreage of the parish as 1,298 with a net annual value of £4,032 made up as £2,021 agricultural land, £2011 buildings, and with an assessable value of parish of £3,022. Over the years, until March 1920 when the first Parish Council were elected, the records show that the number of parishioners who attended were quite representative, and much interest was taken in the proceedings.

The question of building council properties in Leckhampton was raised in 1920, but turned down because it was thought that the increased rates necessary to do so would be too great. One man who was present said he would be willing to pay a shilling rate to ensure that a home could be provided for men returning from the Armed Services, but it was not until 1951 - and then under compulsory measures - that land was obtained to build council houses in Church Road [at The Close]. Other property at Warden Hill and Woodlands [also part of Leckhampton Parish - North] continues to be developed quite rapidly.

#### PARISH BOUNDARIES AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

It is no easy task to explain the complicated differences between the boundaries of the civil and the ecclesiastical parish of Leckhampton. A hundred years ago the civil parish extended much further than it does today. In 1893 a total of 294 acres (rateable value £4,071) was transferred to the Borough of Cheltenham, followed by another large acreage at a later date. It is this which makes it seem a divided village as the boundary extends down the centre of Church Road and Leckhampton Road, leaving the village without a school, post office or public house. Yet in the northern part of the parish a very extensive housing estate at Warden Hill and the Woodlands has developed, making a total number of persons on the voting register of over 1,700.

The church of St. Philips and St. James was built in 1840 and in 1869 a separate ecclesiastical district was assigned to that church by the Commissioners. In 1884 the population of SS Philip and James was about 3,000 and Leckhampton 700.

Emmanuel Church was built in 1936 and one side of the Old Bath Road extending to Pilford Road was in that parish, with its own

vicarage in Leckhampton Road, near the railway station.

The Leckhampton Road as far as the Malvern Inn public house, was officially opened in 1859 and christened with a bottle of wine. When it was extended above the Malvern Inn to Pilley Lane the road was treated with a special gravel and at the side was a deep stone gully, taking rainwater off the hill.

#### COTSWOLD UNDERGROUND

At the first meeting of 1994 members heard a fascinating talk from Arthur Price on quarrying in the Whittington area during the mid 19C. These four or five separate quarries covered an area of some 25 acres and were linked with an extensive roadway system that extended for over two miles. Most of us were well aware of the many surface quarries scattered about the Cotswolds but his carefully researched description of underground mining for stone beneath Cleeve Hill, illustrated with his own slides, was a revelation and at times had us on the edge of our seats.

\*\*\*\*\*

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members:-  
Mr.E.Armitage, Mr.and Mrs.L.Churchman, Mr.and Mrs.K.Flemons  
Mr.M.Launchbury, Mrs.J.D.Warmingham, Mr.and Mrs.M.Wood

\*\*\*\*\*

#### Chairman's Message - John Randall

##### WANTED - URGENTLY - A VOLUNTEER

With an increased membership it is necessary to spread out the jobs and to this end we would appreciate someone who will be willing to undertake the post of Programme Secretary. It is not a particularly onerous task (the 1994/1995 programme is already sorted out) and we can help anyone who lacks experience.

Our thanks to all of Tom Hewlett's willing team of researchers who have made such an impact on the collection of information relating to our proposed publication '1894'. A great deal has been forthcoming from the old newspapers and this is now being collated into what will be the first draft. It is inevitable that those of us who have retired will be able to devote the most time to the project; please don't worry if you, because of other commitments, are not in a position to give assistance at this stage - no doubt your day will come!

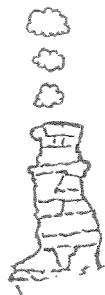
A date for your diary; Gloucestershire Family History Society Open Day, on Saturday April 30th at the St.Philips and St.James Parish Centre, Suffolk Square. More details at our next meeting.

\*\*\*\*\*

A 50p donation to funds is requested for attendance at all meetings, to pay for hire of the hall. (Members are encouraged to bring visitors and the usual donation of 50p is requested).

Editor; Bruce Stait, 8 Mornington Drive, CHELTENHAM. Tel:517488  
Leckhampton L.H.S. Annual subscription; Individual £3 Joint £4.50





# smoke signal

NUMBER 7 JUNE 1994

Hon. Sec. Alison Merrett  
17 Hall Rd. Leckhampton  
Tel:- 238086

Once again we express our sincere thanks to the staff of the Gloucester Record Office for making our visit on Feb.22nd so enjoyable. Several items of interest were on display, including the sale details of Leckhampton Court 1894 and some old maps of the area. One of particular interest (D2507/3) was the wartime map of Cheltenham showing the location of each bomb dropped in the Second World War, with Leckhampton having a surprising number. [The LHS has now acquired a copy]. Donald Biddle was a little lad at the Parish School in Hall Road during this period. Here are his recollections;

## A FEW MEMORIES OF WARTIME LECKHAMPTON

Childhood memories of this period are a little blurred (not surprising perhaps after the passage of 50 years) but against a background of food rationing, clothes rationing, the blackout, gas masks, travel restrictions, and the shortage of almost everything you could think of (including modern text books), life for a young person was still interesting - and at times exciting.

Our parish was fortunate to escape serious damage by enemy action, except for the direct hit on the Pilley railway bridge on the night of Dec.11 1940 and the death of three people in a bungalow in Maida Vale, a few hundred yards away. [Leckhampton had no military targets and these raids were probably mistakes].

In another raid, [possibly Oct.19 1940] a stick of 19 bombs fell in an East-West direction, closely following the railway line that passed through Leckhampton. [Only two exploded, both on Lilley Brook golf course]. One landed just behind the school, another in the garden of No.25 Church Road opposite the Parish Hall, and another two in Pilley Crescent, burrowing under the foundations and leaving a large hole. Luckily, most of this stick of bombs fell into fields, indeed the Church Road occupants were unaware of their near miss until they awoke next morning, although the residents of Pilley Crescent were taken to spend the night in a school hall.

The next day, together with a group of excited village youngsters I stood by an army lorry and watched while a sapper from the Royal Engineers bomb disposal squad removed the detonator and pulled out a piece of paper on which was typed, 'Best wishes from Czechoslovakia'. Some brave soul, one of Hitler's slave labourers, had interfered with the detonator, saving many of our lives. The UXB were taken to the Crippetts and exploded in the stream bed opposite the present pig farm, and after it was all over the village lads examined the crater.

At that time I lived at No.93 Church Road and my father and our neighbour, Joe Pollard, dug out a combined air raid shelter for the two families in their back garden. It was well equipped with benches, duck boards, spades, blankets, hurricane lamps and torches, and lined with rough pine boards. Both men were very pleased with their joint effort, and although we used it on a few occasions I think we were more concerned about the possibility of the whole thing caving in, rather than the bombs or ack-ack shells bursting in the skies above.

We were grateful for the shelter on the night of Nov.14/15 1940 when, in retaliation for an RAF raid on Munich which had taken place on Nov.8 the Luftwaffe made a mass attack on Coventry. In a raid that lasted for eleven hours, wave after wave of German bombers came over Leckhampton from the Dorset coast and pounded the city to rubble. I well remember standing outside the shelter and gazing into the night sky, listening to the distinctive throb of the enemy aeroplane engines, as the seemingly unending stream passed overhead.

Despite wartime shortages, our childhood games went on as usual and the focus for many of us, especially in the evening, was around the war memorial, where hockey on roller skates was played in the road. The Sports Field, now part of the school playing field was the location for ad hoc games of cricket or football.

One of the favourite pastimes for boys, was the building of both flying and non-flying model aircraft. Austin Nicholls, whose father ran the garage in the Leckhampton Road on the site of the present Honda garage, was a few years older than most of us, and his skill in aircraft construction was much superior. One evening he brought large five foot wingspan rubber-powered model to the field and we experimented with a simple device slung under the fuselage, which emitted smoke. Circling above us, all went well until a spark set the whole thing alight. In the darkening sky this was quite spectacular but it aroused some angry comments from nervous neighbours who were worried about the blackout.

During the war there were no fireworks but we created some satisfactory explosions from dampened carbide inside Tate and Lyle Golden Syrup tins. As tin sizes increased to almost a foot high these explosions reached megaton proportions, doors and windows rattled and a strict embargo was slapped on any further experiments by the adults of the community.

The school was much smaller than the present, with just six classes; two infants, run by Miss Hillman and Miss Isaacs, and the juniors with Miss Hancock (first year), Mr. Green (second year), Miss Weaving (third year) and Mr. Poulton headmaster (fourth year). This school, with its excellent and stable staff, provided an important and disciplined education throughout the war years and after, and I well remember the excitement when we found that seven of us had passed for the Grammar School in 1941, setting a record for several years.

All the windows in the school were taped to reduce the dangers of flying glass splinters, sandbags were in evidence, and buckets filled with sand and water stood ready for use in the event of fire. The canteen did a roaring trade, eking out our meagre rations, although the Spam and greens probably did not reach cordon bleu standards!

On the North side, where the present car park is located, were the air raid shelters, large enough to accept all the 160 plus pupils and staff. During one particular raid, as we were being led into the shelter, we could see a German Heinkel 111 bomber in the distance, releasing its load of bombs. These landed on the Gloster Aircraft Company factory at Hucclecote, where my father was superintendent of the Tool Room. Luckily, on the day of the raid, he had been called away from the area a few minutes before the bombs fell but he was very shaken when he came home that night. Although he worked long hours at GAC he was also involved in firewatching in the village, based at an outbuilding in the garden of the cottage by the war memorial, No.42.

One day when I was cycling home from the Grammar School I found myself getting ever closer to a barrage balloon and when reaching Church Road it was right overhead. It had broken free of its moorings near the GAC factory and had drifted towards Cheltenham until reaching Leckhampton, where it was spotted by, among others, Daphne Eeles, who was then only twelve. She grabbed the trailing wire and secured it around the corner post of the Sports Pavilion, where the runaway balloon stayed until the Army came to take it home.

The use of the grounds and buildings of Leckhampton Court by both German and Italian prisoners of war provided additional interest in the village. The POWs spent much of their time in creating small water gardens and miniature windmills around their huts, or working at various farms in the area. They were regularly marched to the sports field where, to a young teenager, some very impressive games of football took place.

At an early stage of the war, some evacuees from Birmingham and the north-east were billeted in the village. They were mainly a tough breed of inner city youth, but they didn't stay long and life soon returned to its normal rural character.

We followed the progress of the various battles that were taking place all over the globe with the aid of large maps provided by the newspapers, such as the Daily Express, sticking in coloured flags to denote the combatants. Leckhampton was generally untouched by world events but I remember looking down from the railway bridge on one occasion and seeing a GWR Castle locomotive hauling a train of ambulance coaches containing wounded but cheering servicemen.

The Local Defence Volunteers, [the LDV, or 'Look, Duck and Vanish'] later the Home Guard, practiced on the school playground and although their drill movements may have been a bit shaky (and a source of some amusement to the lads watching) we were secretly pleased that Leckhampton had its own defence force, to engage the Nazi hordes should they arrive.

\*\*\*\*\*

Amy Woolacott wishes to take issue with Eric Miller on his origin of the name Leckhampton in our last 'Smoke Signal';

"May I beg to differ with Eric's view that 'lech (Celtic) does not sit easily with hampton (Saxon)'.

Place names often show bilingual features due to the influx of newcomers adding their own name to that of the local, and is very

common in the Welsh border areas, reflecting changes as well as continuity from an ancient time. (It is ironic that 'Welsh' means foreign in Saxon, yet it was the Saxons who were the newcomers).

A good local example is Bredon; Bre = hill (Celtic) and don = hill (Saxon OE 'dun'). Presumably the Dobunni Celtic settlers occupied the Iron Age fort on Bredon Hill, but the Saxon village grew beneath the hill. This has a parallel at Leckhampton, also with a Dobunnic Iron Age fort of similar size on a hill, which we might assume was identified as Leck (Llech = flat stone or rock - Celtic) as Samuel Rudder suggested. When Leckhampton fort was excavated the remains of dry-stone walls were found.

These observations lead me to suggest that it seems reasonable that Leckhampton's place-name originated with Celtic reference to the locally abundant flat stones or rocks. [Please don't confuse me with further facts - my mind is made up - or it was. Editor]

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Our forthcoming publication, 'Leckhampton 1894', is on target and should be available sometime in September. Members have responded with enthusiasm to the project, and very nearly all the text they supplied has been transferred to floppy disk, ready for the printer. At the moment it appears that the book will run to 64 pages with some two dozen 'new' photos that have not appeared in previous books. It is hoped that it will sell for around £3 but this is subject to a final decision by the committee.

We are opening a members-only subscription list, at a discount on the published price of 50p per copy, and asking for money to be paid BEFORE the book is published. With only a limited print-run we anticipate that the book will soon be a sell-out, so make sure of your copies now by adding your name to the list.

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Chairman's Message - John Randall

#### IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

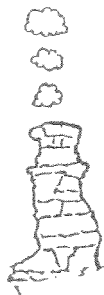
The date of the AGM has been changed to Thursday October 6th. This is one week later than that shown on your printed programme, so please alter your calendar accordingly.

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:-  
Mrs.M.Nelson, Mrs.M.Robinson, Mr.K.Pollock, Dr.A.B.Wallis,  
Mr.C.Cleal, Mr.M.Rigby

\*\*\*\*\*

A 50p donation to funds is requested for attendance at all meetings, to pay for hire of the hall. (Members are encouraged to bring visitors and the usual donation of 50p is requested).

Contributions from the members for inclusion in future editions of "Smoke Signal" are always welcomed. Please send them to;  
Bruce Stait, 8 Mornington Drive, CHELTENHAM. Tel:517488  
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# smoke signal

NUMBER 8 SEPTEMBER 1994

Hon. Sec. Alison Merrett  
17 Hall Rd. Leckhampton  
Tel:- 238086

## 'LECKHAMPTON 1894 - THE END OF AN ERA'

This month sees an important milestone for the society with the publication of its first book, produced entirely by the members, in a remarkably short time scale. We believe that it will be well-received by all who are interested in the parish, and members who have not already taken advantage of the special offer of £2.50 recently notified may just have time to put their names down to obtain copies at this price if they act quickly. Full-price copies (£3.50) will be on sale at our future meetings.

\*\*\*\*\*

ROBERT CARY BARNARD by Rick Kedge

Robert Cary Barnard was born in 1827 of a well-known local family. His working life was spent in the Army, reaching the rank of Major in the 41st Regiment before taking early retirement in his late 30s. He became an active member of the Archaeological and Nature Science Societies, taking a great interest in the many local and scientific and literary societies, and for many years was the Honorary Secretary of the Cheltenham Library, which he helped to found and of which he was trustee. He was a close friend and neighbour of G.B.Witts, also a noted figure in the village, being a JP and chairman of the parish council.

From 1863 he lived at 'Bartlow' on Leckhampton Hill, a large impressive house that had been designed for him by a friend, the well-known local architect J.Middleton, who also responsible for the enlargement of Leckhampton Church. (Sadly, the original house had to be demolished not many years ago because of subsidence and was replaced by a modern residence.)

Barnard was a man of many interests, with a great love and fascination for Leckhampton and its past, contributing articles entitled 'Lessons on Botany for the Working Man' to the parish magazine, but he is perhaps best known for his painstaking transcriptions of the old Parish Records, his findings being the subject of a series of lectures which were reproduced in the Parish Magazines of 1897 and later published in the form of a small book, 'The Records of Leckhampton'.

R.C.Barnard died at 'Bartlow' on December 22nd 1906 but no mention of his burial appears in the parish records. Unusually for Army Officers resident locally, he was a Liberal Non-conformist, and one of his surviving relatives believes he was cremated and his ashes scattered on the hill.

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*LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY*

With the publication of our book commemorating 1894 the Society can now look forward to its next project, and the preceding short article by Rick Kedge gives us an inkling of what it might be.

A complete history of the parish is our main aim, but this, by its very nature, is some years away. In the meantime we are considering another small publication, highlighting a number of Leckhampton families such as the Pearmans, Ballingers, Bendalls and indeed a whole host of names, detailing the part they have played in the local scene over the years.

MEMBERS - PLEASE STAND BY FOR FURTHER ACTION!

\*\*\*\*\*

The 1891 Census of Leckhampton, recently compiled by a small team of members, has already proved to be of immense value and would be of still greater value if someone would be prepared to spend time in further research on this subject. It would be most useful if the differences between 'then and now' were recorded (possibly by a ground search to ascertain the changes) as we are aware that many of the original names of the properties have disappeared or changed.

At the same time it may be that someone can go through the six census returns available in the Cheltenham Library, dating from 1841, in order to 'follow through' such changes each year, to see how properties altered, and although it might appear a daunting task we feel sure that a group of members would find it both interesting and rewarding.

The possibility of tape-recording the memories of some of our older inhabitants is also something that needs to be considered urgently, as much local knowledge will disappear unless such steps are taken.

\*\*\*\*\*

Local members can hardly have failed to notice the changes that have taken place in Bath Road shops over the past few years, with old-established businesses changing hands and some even closing down completely. This trend seems likely to continue and a complete study of the area, detailing the history of each of the shops as far as possible, before any further changes take place, would be most useful.

In this connection, who among us has a photo of the 'Pop-In' shop that stood for years just inside Moorend Road until a few weeks ago, and has now returned to its former status as a dwelling. This is a classic example of what we ought to be recording before it becomes too late.

We need to compile a list of 'places that have disappeared', in order to ascertain the important photographs that are missing from our archives. High on the list would be the Ladies Sanatorium. When we enquired at the Ladies College for a photo showing the outside of the building (for the 1894 book) they were unable to help - surely somebody must have one in their snapshot album? Another vanished feature is the site of the old forge in Norwood Street, where a block of flats is now being built.

\*\*\*\*\*

The coach trip on August 3rd arranged by the Charlton Kings LHS was a very pleasant occasion, much enjoyed by all 18 of our members who attended.

We first visited Chalford Church for a brief look-round and then on to Tetbury for lunch. Afterwards the present owner of Chavenage House, an Elizabethan manor, gave an entertaining and informative talk and the day was rounded off with a cream tea.

So far as I could tell the whole day went off without a hitch and our thanks and congratulations to Mrs.J.Sale for her first-rate organisation. Next year it will be our turn to organise something along similar lines.

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#### LECKHAMPTON IN CAMBRIDGE by Eric Miller

It is something of a surprise to come across the name of Leckhampton in the University of Cambridge, where the graduate campus of Corpus Christi College is known as Leckhampton Hall. It is a modern development centred around Leckhampton House, which was built in 1880 by a Fellow of Trinity College, Frederick William Henry Myers.

Myers had been a pupil at Cheltenham College from 1856 to 1859, before going on to read Classics at Cambridge, and I am indebted to the Secretary of the Cheltonian Society for much of the following information.

Myers' precise connection with Leckhampton is not clear. When he entered Cheltenham College as a day boy, his widowed mother lived at an address in Blackheath, his father having been a clergyman in Keswick. Unfortunately, the College entry form does not show his lodging, though it is reasonable to assume that he lived in Leckhampton, or at least that he knew it well. Evidently he developed a fondness for the place and when he settled down to life as a Don in Cambridge, he chose to name his house after the village.

Myers is considered one of the most distinguished and unusual of the Old Cheltonians. An outstanding classical scholar and essayist and one of the earliest of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, he invented the word 'telepathy', for which he was convinced there was satisfactory evidence. It is sad to record that a message he received through a medium warned him that he would die in 1902, and he planned his work with reference to that date. In fact he died of a heart attack in Rome in 1901.

There is a striking memorial to Myers in Cheltenham College Chapel, executed in the workshops of H.H.Martyn. It includes a bronze bust of Myers and the symbolic Tree of Life. At its foot is a tiny mole, recalling the time when the sight of a dead mole brought home to him as a child the awful finality of death, and set to him wonder if there was another life to come. Happily, in the carving, the little mole is again alive and well and busily burrowing.

Sources; Prospectus for Corpus Christi College Cambridge:  
Chelt. College Register 1841-1889: Cheltonian Soc.News 1987-1988

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An important tool for anyone undertaking historical research in the UK is the excellent series of maps produced by the Ordnance Survey. It may not be generally appreciated that Dodwells in the Bath Road are the local agents for all products and services of the OS, which now include 'Superplan' - large scale mapping in digital form. This is too complex to be dealt with in 'Smoke Signal' but a visit to Dodwells is recommended should you be wanting a large scale map of this, or any other area - but I should warn you that the service is not cheap.

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#### Chairman's Message - John Randall

When asked to summarise our second year (1993/1994) the simple answer that springs to mind is, 'a most successful year'. The Society has grown in size, and membership now approaches the 100 mark: the programme was varied and well-appreciated, and not a few of us have been involved in 'Leckhampton 1894'.

However, the rapid growth in the Society's size and the sharply increased work-load has created various problems. When we began only two years ago, we did not appreciate the difficulties that would arise from having the end of the Society Year co-incident with the AGM. The time to prepare and audit the accounts was too short, and we were unable to print the programme for the coming year until after the AGM, after the committee elections had taken place.

We have therefore decided to propose that the Society Year should commence on April 1st instead of October 1st. If adopted the effect of this proposal will be that, for financial purposes there will be a six month period to March 31st 1995 and the committee (elected as at October 1st 1994) will serve until the next AGM which will be in June 1995. The Programme Year will continue to run from September to June.

This proposal, and the alterations to effect it, are detailed in the enclosed Notice for the AGM, which will be held on Thursday October 6th 1994 at Leckhampton School.

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#### STOP PRESS

'1894' will also be available 'at all good booksellers' and a few local outlets including the Sue Ryder Home and the Post Office. Don't leave it too long before you get your copy as we feel sure they are likely to be snapped up before too long!

\*\*\*\*\*

A 50p donation to funds is requested for attendance at all meetings, to pay for hire of the hall. (Members are encouraged to bring visitors and the usual donation of 50p is requested). Contributions from the members for inclusion in future editions of "Smoke Signal" are always welcomed. Please send them to; Bruce Stait, 8 Mornington Drive, CHELTENHAM. Tel:517488  
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# smoke signal

NUMBER 9 DECEMBER 1994

Hon. Sec. Alison Merrett  
17 Hall Road, Leckhampton  
Tel: 238086

## THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Since I last put pen to paper, we have had a rousing success in publishing our first book "Leckhampton 1894 - The End of an Era". Such was that success that we had virtually "sold out" within three weeks and a reprint was ordered. Even more satisfying was that such was the public demand, that that reprint was, in effect, also "sold out" within a few days and the Society now only holds a small stock.

The Annual General Meeting was again well attended and, as hoped, the Constitution was altered to change the Society Year from 1st October to 1st April, as from 1st April 1995. This alteration will help the committee with the running of the Society; it will allow much more time to prepare the accounts before the AGM and to prepare the Programme well before the next season starts in the following September.

As most of you will now be aware, the Society has embarked on a new publication, provisionally entitled "Leckhampton at War - 1939 - 1945". This will call for much dedicated work by the membership, in researching that period in the Press etc., but also in collecting information from residents of Leckhampton, and/or their relatives, who lived in the parish at the time.

Anecdotes, humorous or otherwise; reference to personal diaries; information about gallantry awards; the problems of ordinary life during those wartime years; all will help build up an overall picture but, more important than anything else, will be any photographs that we may be allowed to use for illustration purposes.

Special forms have been drawn up, and if any of you can help, (and we hope that as many of you as possible will take part), please ring either myself (527904) or Tom Hewlett (238617) and we will deliver them to you.

As the festive season approaches, may I take this opportunity of wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

John Randall

The National Monuments Record Centre, Alexander House, 19 Fleming Way, Swindon (0793 414100) holds the public archive of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, and is currently open to the public on one Saturday a month for a trial period. The remaining dates are 17 Dec 94, 21 Jan and 18 Feb 95.

*LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY*

## FRENCH AVIATOR AT LECKHAMPTON, 1912

Among my collection of old postcards is one showing an early aeroplane on the ground surrounded by curious onlookers and captioned "M. Salmét at Leckhampton". [Unfortunately the card is too dark to reproduce here. Ed.] This is the story of that exciting event, as reported in the local press at the time. The visit was part of a tour by the French aviator, sponsored by the Daily Mail, to demonstrate and popularise flying, then in its infancy, to people in this country, few of whom had seen an aeroplane before.

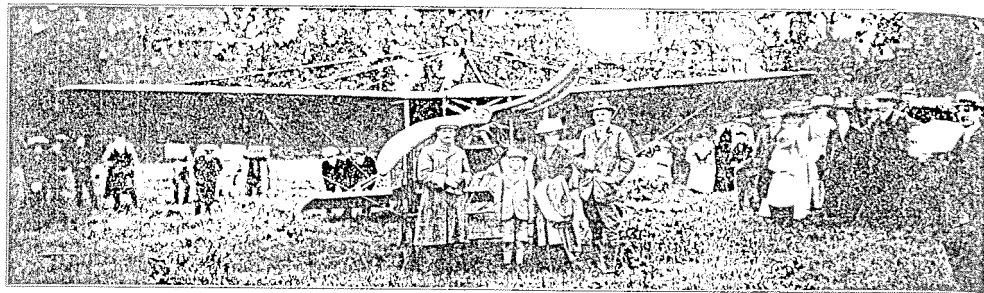
Monsieur Salmét visited Leckhampton on 25 July 1912, which happened to be exactly 3 years to the day after Bleriot first flew across the channel. M. Salmét's plane had been built by Bleriot. Flying was more advanced in France than in England in those early days.

The Cheltenham Chronicle reported it thus: 'There was much excitement on Thursday when M. Salmét flew to Cheltenham from Gloucester on his way to Cirencester. Though he was not the first airman to be seen locally, it was obvious that there were many Cheltonians who had not yet seen an aeroplane. There were others who were sufficiently excited over the new wonder of the age to wait many hours looking anxiously westwards. There was a rumour that the airman was coming at 2 o'clock, but as a matter of fact he had no intention of leaving Gloucester until 4 o'clock, and a few minutes after that hour sharp-eyed people could see a dot in the sky which quickly was seen to be moving towards Cheltenham. This at length was clearly seen to be M. Salmét in his monoplane. Those who were watching in the town from housetops saw him alight in the field Leckhampton-ways, which had been reserved for him. Here a crowd of over 2000 people gave him a hearty welcome, led by the mayor (Mr C. H. Margrett) who was the first to speak to him as he came to earth. About 8 o'clock there was a rumbling noise heard as of a threshing machine, and people came tumbling out of their houses, for they know now that that sound means an aeroplane engine overhead. M. Salmét was making a round of the town prior to his departure for Cirencester.'

Another report, in the Gloucestershire Echo, was much the same but gave some further details in that the flight from Gloucester (the Portham) 'was not altogether uneventful, for the airman was hampered considerably by a strong wind which blew in gusts, and which necessitated extreme care. However, the journey was accomplished without accident at an average height of about 400 feet.' The Echo also reported that the landing site was Rowland's Field at Pilley. This is believed to have been located opposite the Wheatsheaf Inn, probably where Hillary Road and Southfield Close are now.

The Gloucestershire Graphic, the picture supplement to the Chronicle, carried no photographs of the landing at Leckhampton, but it did have a rather nice picture of M. Salmét posing with his plane in the grounds of The Abbey, Cirencester, his destination after leaving Leckhampton.

Alan Gill



### THE FLYING MAN IN CIRENCESTER.

M. SALMET, THE "DAILY MAIL" FLYING MAN, ALIGHTED IN CIRENCESTER ON THE CARNIVAL DAY. HE IS HERE SEEN WITH MASTER ERIC DUGDALE AND CAPT. AND MRS. GORDON DUGDALE, THE ABBEY, CIRENCESTER, IN WHOSE GROUNDS HE ALIGHTED. HIS FLIER OF MONOPLANE IS BEHIND.

### LECKHAMPTON PERSONALITIES PAST AND PRESENT

Once again we are pleased to publish a further chapter from 'Within Living Memory' - the Leckhampton W.I. history of 1957. Please bear in mind that it was written some forty years ago.

DOCTOR EDWARD WILSON, who perished with Scott at the South Pole, spent much of his boyhood in the woods and fields of the Crippetts and the surrounding fields, studying nature. he even slept out in the open, 'training his eyes to mark the habits of every little wild thing, in wood and wold'. His success as a naturalist and artist developed from these youthful beginnings, and this fine man was one of whom we might well be proud.

DOCTOR COTTLE. There was no resident doctor in the last century, but Doctor Cottle came from Cheltenham to a cottage opposite the school every two weeks, meeting and administering to his patients in the kitchen. He was a striking character, handsome and tall, with a large aquiline nose and a magnificent white beard. He did his rounds in a light four-wheeled Norwegian carriage, drawn by two ponies, also from Norway. He married a girl who was also the love of another doctor, but even so they remained firm friends. Dr. Cottle died in 1898.

DOCTOR JANET SALSBURY played the church organ and had the distinction of winning the Degree of Music at Durham University, being the first woman to achieve this honour. At that time there was only one other woman in the whole of England who held a music degree. A Janet Salsbury Cup is competed for in the choir section of the Cheltenham Music Festival each year.

MISS WEBSTER, a kindly lady, was an invalid in a Bath chair, and used to be taken to school where the children would sing 'Flag of Britain proudly waving over many distant seas' and other of her favourite songs, while she held a small flag in her crippled hands. The children were rewarded with little packets of chocolates, and when she died she left a small legacy to plant daffodils which now flower with such profusion in our parish churchyard.

GEORGE BARRATT and CHARLIE BURFORD were employed as dry-stone wallers in the early part of the 20th century. Burford helped to erect the wall when the churchyard was extended.

GEORGE BUBB was a hedger and ditcher, and had the ability to whistle and attract bull finches to him while he worked in the fields.

VICTOR BRUNSDON is a cabinet maker whose work can be seen in many parts of our church. He has made many pieces of lovely furniture, including more than twenty stools for all his grandchildren and others.

AUSTIN V NICHOLLS submitted a beautiful wrought iron panel in a recent exhibition. The design, incorporating roses, petals and a scroll was copied from the door of a house in Leckhampton Road. Its central theme was a spider's web, with an insect hovering on one side. He is a garage mechanic, only using the ordinary combustion stove to heat his metal for shaping, and worked without a proper anvil. [The screen was exhibited in Cheltenham Town Hall in 1950, and is still in Mr Nicholl's possession. He left the village in 1958 and, after some years, settled in Lower Swell, where he owns the old forge dating from 1854. Ed.]

Among the other characters from those early years who were regular callers in the village were the knife-grinder, seldom seen nowadays, and the man who sold 'dripping cakes' who strode down the road calling out his wares.

#### THE NEW SEASON

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members:-

Mr Jonathan Bryant, Mr Jack Bubb, Mr D M Denison, Mrs M Dobie, Mr T Enoch, Mrs J Field, Mr P S Gunn, Mr Trevor Holt, Mr Nigel & Mrs Elsie Hunt, Mr R Launchbury, Mr P Palmer, Mr C Richardson, Mrs B Smith and Miss E Yates.

The season got off to an excellent start with a fascinating talk by Eve Andrew, an historical geographer and author of 'Leckhampton Through The Ages', on the old buildings, fields and paths around Leckhampton. Her photographs clearly showed how much evidence remains of the medieval pattern of the Parish.

#### A HARD ACT TO FOLLOW

We are immensely indebted to Bruce Stait for all his hard work as the first editor of 'Smoke Signal' and of 'Leckhampton 1894'; it is not surprising that he feels the need to take things easier. Most of the material in this issue was commissioned by him, so please keep the contributions flowing. Copy for the March '95 issue should be submitted by the February meeting, or may be left at 28 Church Road. I have been asked to put in a special plea for more helpers to join the team making extracts from the newspapers of 1939-45. If you can help, please contact Alan Gill on 519248.

Finally, a reminder that on 19 January (not the 20th as printed in the programme) we are to hear a talk on the National Waterways Museum by Tony Condor, and on 16 February David Aldred will speak on Lost Villages of the Cotswolds. As always visitors and prospective members are very welcome at our meetings. The annual subscription is £3 (individual) or £4.50 (joint), and a 50p donation is requested at each meeting attended.

Roger Richards



# smoke signal

NUMBER 10 MARCH 1995

Hon. Sec. Alison Merrett  
17 Hall Road, Leckhampton  
Tel: 238086

## THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Since my last 'message' Christmas has come and gone; we have had another excellent 'Social', which was well appreciated by all who attended, and we have had very well attended meetings to hear two very good talks, notes of which are to be found below.

Work on our new publication is going well. We have received a number of contributions to be included, and research is continuing into the period, particularly in the local Press and collecting information from residents of Leckhampton. However, we do require more information of all sorts, particularly interviews with 'old' residents of the village, and photographs. If any of you can help, please get in touch.

In addition, the Committee has received an offer from Daphne Wheeler's daughter to edit the book for us, and we were very happy to accept that generous offer.

John Randall

## NATIONAL WATERWAYS MUSEUM

The speaker at our January meeting was Tony Condor, who was instrumental in securing a place for the museum in what had been grain warehouses when the Gloucester docks were restored and redeveloped commencing in 1985 at a cost of £3½ million. The high cost was due to the neglected state of the buildings, which are listed, and the need to strengthen them to house heavy exhibits and to comply with fire and safety regulations.

He has a staff of 36 and a budget of £½ million to run the business, maintain the contents and acquire new exhibits. Sadly, much material from the Victorian era has not survived. Wherever possible items are displayed in working order with consequent wear and tear and difficulty in obtaining spare parts. For example the Smithy's bellows need a special leather and fish oil, and the two shire horses need shoeing every two months at a cost of £70 a set. The original railway lines and turntable have been kept to assist in the movement of exhibits.

Among the major items is a fully restored steam crane which had been used in a Leeds scrap yard from 1880 to 1833, a concrete barge rescued from Sharpness docks in 1970, a 1960 pleasure cruiser and a restored icebreaker resting on a railway wagon.

The museum's main aim is to keep history alive, particularly for the younger generation. Some 16-17,000 school children visit every year.

*LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY*

## LOST VILLAGES OF THE COTSWOLDS

The talk at our February meeting was give by David Aldred, who has made a detailed study on behalf of Bristol University of deserted medieval settlements in the Winchcombe area. He has identified 32 settlements which have either partially or totally disappeared, or were in a different position from the modern village of the same name. In some cases the name has been preserved in that of a farm, as in Roel Farm near Hawling or Wontley Farm on Cleeve Hill. Hawling itself is half its former size and Guiting Power has shifted its position. There used to be an Upper Gotherington in the area of the present Manor Farm, which was a slave settlement.

The climax of settlement was reached in the period 1310-20, before the onset of the Black Death in which over one third of the population died. From 1500 enclosure of the land for sheep farming displaced some villagers, but in many cases the settlements in question had already been abandoned. Another factor was 'emparkment', such as occurred at Sudeley, which had 16 families in 1327 and which disappeared when the Castle was built in 1442.

There is documentary evidence for former settlements, some of which can no longer be identified on the ground. Traces of habitation can often be seen surrounded by the ridge and furrow remains of medieval cultivation. An aerial photograph of Great Stretton in Leicestershire graphically illustrated this point. Settlements were often quite small, with several to a parish. The village/parish was a later development. Since the dissolution of the monasteries in 1540 the pattern of the countryside has remained relatively unchanged, except of course where urbanisation has taken place.

## THE LECKHAMPTON PLAYERS

Prior to the founding of the Leckhampton Players in 1947 there appears to have been no official dramatic society in the village, although the Leckhampton Company of the Church Lads Brigade and the Girl's Club was staging pantomime as far back as 1910 in the Parish Hall. After the Second World War interest in amateur dramatics was renewed and the inaugural meeting of the Leckhampton Players was held at Leckhampton School on Friday, 17th January 1947. A committee of 9 members was elected under the chairmanship of the Rector, the Revd. E.W.B. Cordingley, with Mrs Poulton, wife of the Headmaster, as secretary.

The first production took the form of a revue with songs based on Irish and London scenes, together with two short one act plays. Seating was provided for 120 with prices at 3/-, 2/6 and 1/6, and a 'very satisfactory' profit of £9. 8. 6½d. This encouraged the committee to produce a pantomime, Dick Whittington, in January 1948, and follow it up with a 3 Act play, 'Laburnum Grove', in April. This set a pattern for the next ten years of pantomime in January/February and plays in October, with the exception of a Variety show in 1950. Other early productions included well-known favourites such as 'Arsenic and Old Lace', 'Badger's Green' and 'The Ghost Train'. At the beginning the plays made a loss, but they were well supported by the ever popular pantomimes.

From the outset it was necessary for the Players to fight to improve both stage and hall conditions and by April 1955 the trustees agreed to have the necessary work carried out. Thanks to increases in revenue and good working relations with the hall management committee investment in essential lighting and sound equipment was initiated early on. Today productions are lit with the aid of a remote mobile control panel from the back of the hall. The purchase and building of stage scenery and the provision of curtains, ladders, stage floor covering, new seating etc, together with maintenance and decoration, has taken place with the assistance of volunteer work parties.

Despite successful pantomimes in 1956/57 the financial position was still weak, so it was decided to stage a review 'April Antics' in 1958, whose large cast might bring in a larger audience. This experiment proved successful and the revue was well received by the public, but there was a plea not to drop plays altogether, though in the event no play was put on for the next three years.

In June 1963 it was decided to stage three productions per year; an autumn play, a pantomime in the new year and a spring revue. This format has continued to the present day, except that, since 1984, the revues have given way to a highly successful series of old time music halls. By the late 1960's the increasing fame of the Society led to a new development, cabaret performances to various clubs and institutions and private parties. Such activities still continue.

1968 saw the Players' 21st anniversary celebrated by the revue 'Anniversary Appenings' and a special party, and also saw the Society's first venture into the One Act Competitive Play Festival with A.A. Milne's 'Man in a Bowler Hat'. This received a very favourable adjudication, and the cast felt that they had learned much from this production and from the demands of competition in front of an 'alien' audience. Further involvement in competitive work did not occur until 1981, when the black comedy 'As Good As New' was entered. Again this was a valuable exercise in assessing the Player's performance against other amateur companies in the county. However, three productions a year, the inevitable clash of rehearsal times and the availability of performers has meant that no further competitions have been entered.

In 1971 Norman Wisdom agreed to be Honorary Patron of the Society, and a Patron's scheme, started in 1988, is now well supported. The Society celebrated its Silver Jubilee with a buffet dance and a special revue, and its 40th anniversary with a party and old time music hall.

During its 48 years the company has been well served by long-standing members, both as performers and behind the scenes. These were recognised by the presentation of Long Service awards in 1993 and 1994 to the following:

35+ years - Mr P Brooker  
30+ years - Mrs V Biddle, Mrs C Brooker, Mrs T Peacey  
25+ years - Mr D Biddle, Mr E Tyler, Miss L Humphries  
20+ years - Mrs J Brown, Mrs J Kean, Mrs S Wood, Mr K Peacey.

Don Biddle

# FROM THE EDITOR

As this is our 10th issue I thought it would be helpful to provide an INDEX to Smoke Signal so far. Purely administrative matters have been omitted. References are to Number/Page. Copies of back numbers may be obtained at monthly meetings (or from John Randall) @ 20p each or £1-60 for the previous 9 issues.

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We are grateful to Don Biddle for the very informative article on the Leckhampton Players, which is from an early draft of a history of the Players to be published in connection with their 50th anniversary in 1997. Who can offer something equally good for the next issue of Smoke Signal? Copy for the June '95 issue should be submitted by the May meeting, or may be left at 28 Church Road. As always visitors and prospective members are very welcome at our meetings. The annual subscription is £3 (individual) or £4.50 (joint), and a 50p donation is requested at each meeting attended.

Roger Richards