



smoke signal

NUMBER 11 JUNE 1995

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

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Enclosed with this issue of *Smoke Signal* you will find the notice of this year's Annual General Meeting, to be held on 15th June. As you will see, I have decided to resign as Chairman, but am standing for re-election to the Committee. This decision has been taken for various reasons and after much thought. I have been Chairman since the Society was formed, in which time it has come of age and has become well established, having published its first book, and is well on the way to its second. I have always considered that there should be changes to the senior officers of a society on a regular basis, and I think now is the right time for such a change. I trust that you will all give the same sort of support to my successor as you have to me.

John Randall

THE WORK OF AN ARCHIVIST

The work of an archivist in a commercial organisation was the subject of the talk at our March meeting, given by Isabel Syed of Eagle Star Insurance Company, who is in charge of its museum and business archives. She began her talk with a historical review of the Company, which was founded in 1904 by Edward Mountain of British Dominion marine insurers. He was an early exponent of the takeover business and acquired some long-established life companies, including the Eagle (founded in 1807), the Sceptre and the Star. The expanded company was first known as Eagle, Star and British Dominion, but this was shortened to Eagle Star in 1937. It was a pioneer in the motor insurance field and in forms of insurance designed for women. It also produced innovative advertising material and a year book, both of which form an important part of the archive. The Company has had its head office in Cheltenham for 30 years.

Mrs Syed has been with the Company since 1986, having previously worked on church records. Her main task, time permitting, is to compile a catalogue which it is hoped to publish in 1996. Other duties of more immediate concern include dealing with enquiries, both from within the Company and without, publicity, accessions, research, conservation and the museum. The work entails visits to outside bodies, eg other county record offices. At the conclusion of the talk we were able to examine a sample of the archive, including advertising material, the year book and insurance documents, one of which had been issued to the Prince Consort.

LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

BEATING THE BOUNDS

Francis Kilvert in his diary described the beating of bounds in Oxford, on Holy Thursday in 1876. Kilvert "fell in with the Vicar, churchwardens and sidesmen ... and shared their reward of bread cheese and ale". During the last century this ceremony of "perambulating the parish" was also performed in Leckhampton.

The Churchwardens made a payment of 19s 3d in March 1831 to William Burrows [1] for 7 gallons of beer, together with bread and cheese taken at the Norwood Arms after "perambulating the parish" (The odd 3 old pence was for a further pint of beer!). In March 1836 £1 2s 0d was paid to Mr May, evidently the licensee of the Norwood Arms, for expenses relating to the perambulation. Perambulations carried out in colder weather required stronger fortification, and one November 21 glasses of grog were consumed (at 9 old pence each). The quantities give some idea of the numbers likely to have joined in, and the payments illustrate the observation W.E. Tate in *The Parish Chest* that expenses incurred during a perambulation, including the cost of refreshments, were chargeable to the rates, though these would not cover music and banners.

The Overseers' Accounts for the quarter ending 25 December 1835 [2] show that £1 0s 1d was paid to "Saml and Thomas Hamlett for attending perambulation". A Samuel Hamlett had been mentioned in connection with a perambulation of Charlton Kings in 1831 ("Sam Hamlett aged man" and Robert Hamlett, who "dug the crosses") [3]. As an "aged man", Samuel Hamlett would have been well versed in the conduct of a perambulation, and as a Charltonian he would at least have known the boundaries of his own parish, some of them shared with Leckhampton. The accompanying poster [4] shows that in October 1835 the perambulation of the Leckhampton parish boundaries commenced "at or near a certain place called Pilley". Readers may care to work out for themselves exactly where this was - probably close to where Pilley Bridge now stands. It will also be seen that the poster was printed by Messrs Harper. By chance, the Leckhampton Overseers' Accounts for December 1835 to March 1836 show a bill paid to William Harper "for printing Voters' papers and Notices of Perambulation - £1 5s 0d". A bill was also paid to one Thomas Morgan for paint used in the perambulation of the parish - presumably to mark boundary stones and the like, in addition possibly to the digging of crosses mentioned earlier.

In later years the Leckhampton authorities may have been less assiduous in observing the practice. On April 13, 1870, the *Cheltenham Examiner*, under the heading of "Beating the Bounds", reported that "yesterday and today the ceremony of perambulation of the Parish in the Leckhampton district is being performed for the first time in 20 years. Since the last occasion much building has been added to the district, some of the houses being partly in the Parish of Cheltenham and partly in Leckhampton; hence the necessity for defining the boundaries".

More recently still, though many more houses have been added, properly surveyed maps showing parish boundaries have made such a picturesque practice unnecessary. There are more effective ways of recording and marking the limits of a parish, but people have lost an opportunity of getting together for a jolly outing. Or does anyone fancy reviving it today?

Eric Miller

PARISH OF
LECKHAMPTON,
Otherwise
LACKINGTON,
In the County of Gloucester.

WE do hereby give Notice, to all to whom it may concern, that on *Monday* the *Nineteenth* day of *October* Instant, a **PERAMBULATION** of the whole **CIRCUIT** and **BOUNDARIES** of the said Parish of Leckhampton, otherwise Lackington, in the County of Gloucester will be made by the Inhabitants of the said Parish, in order that all Persons who are, or may be interested in, or affected by, such perambulation, may attend and object thereto, if they have cause respectively;—and we do hereby give further Notice, that such perambulation will be entered upon, and commenced at, the boundary of the Parish of Cheltenham, at or near a certain place called Pilley, where the several Parishes of Charlton Kings, Cheltenham, and Leckhampton unite, at *Eight* of the Clock of the Forenoon of the said day, and be continued from thence to the Westward, and so on around the whole Boundaries and Circuit of the said Parish, until it shall terminate at the place of commencement before-mentioned.—Dated this Ninth day of October, 1835.

WALTER and BILLINGS,

Clerks to the Vestry of the said Parish.

Harper, Printer, ss Office, Cheltenham.

- [1] Probably the William Burrows who was a member of the Vestry Meeting in 1830-31. In the Leckhampton Voters' List for 1833 one William Burrows is shown as tenant of Moorend Farm, as well as possessing the freehold of a house in Norwood Street.
- [2] GRO P198/ IN 1/30.
- [3] CKLHS Bulletin No 16, p55.
- [4] Reproduced by permission of the GRO: P198a CW 3/1. (I have referred in *Smoke Signal* No 6 to some examples of Leckhampton's alternative name of Lackington/Leckington.)

THE NAUNTON PARK AREA

This was the subject of the talk at our April meeting, given by John Milner. He defined the boundaries as Thirlstaine Road, the Old Bath Road, the former railway cutting and the line of Leckhampton Road - Bath Road. The stimulus for its development came from the need to find a better route to Bath, avoiding the steep climb up Leckhampton Hill. The (new) Bath Road was opened in 1813 and the Shurdington Road in 1823. Thereafter this south east quadrant of Cheltenham, which had been largely open fields, was progressively developed. The sale of the Fairfield estate released building land. As well as the great houses such as Thirlstaine House and Lake House, and the villas of the rising middle class, a working class district grew up in the Exmouth Street area, where the pattern of the streets follows ancient field boundaries. The whole area forms a self-contained community which has been comparatively untouched by modern development, and contains many interesting architectural features. This was illustrated by the slides which John Milner showed at the end of his talk.

SUMMER OUTING to BROUGHTON CASTLE, 2 AUGUST

Broughton Castle (near Banbury) is a moated manor dating from 1300 AD, owned by the same family for 600 years. It has fine interiors, Civil War associations, and there are gardens, a park and the inevitable shop. There will be an introductory talk and guided tour in the morning, when the castle is not open to the public. We shall form into two parties 10 minutes apart, and we are not allowed to wear high heeled shoes in the house. The church, St Mary's, is set close by.

Luncheon arrangements are a choice between the pub in the village nearby, picnic in the castle grounds (and risk the weather), or a salad or ploughman's by arrangement at the castle booked not less than three days before the day of the visit. There will be other locations to visit in the afternoon, Bledington church being the main one, then a tea stop in Stow-on-the-Wold. The cost of the day should be around £6.50, excluding meals.

Amy Woolacott 522566

FROM THE EDITOR

Members may have read in the Cheltenham Independent of 30th March a letter from Mr Allan Wood describing the conservation work now under way on Leckhampton Hill under the Gloucestershire Trust for Nature Conservation. Anyone wishing to help with this work should contact the Borough Technical and Landscape officer, Simon Lee, tel 250019.

We welcome the following new members who have joined since the last list was published in *Smokesignal* No 9:

Mr D Ballinger, Mr G Capper, Miss G Owen, Miss I Owen, Mr & Mrs J Pickles, Miss Y Stafford, Mr & Mrs D Thom, Mr C Trye.

Copy for the September '95 issue should be submitted by 17th August to me 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



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NUMBER 12 SEPTEMBER 1995

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

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Enclosed with this edition of *Smoke Signal* you will find programme of our Society's forthcoming evening meetings. I feel sure that the visiting speakers' talks will be of great interest. Our second book is continuing with its slow (and painful?) birth, but by the time you read this the 'book committee' hope to have the production eased into phase 2, that is, editing.

Amy Woolacott

ANNUAL OUTING

The second joint outing with the Charlton Kings Local History Society took place on Wednesday 2nd August, organised by our new Chairman, Amy Woolacott. The destination was Broughton Castle in Oxfordshire. On a hot summer's day the surrounding moat, battlemented gatehouse, vaulted passages, priest's room and medieval great hall seemed serene, though we were vividly reminded of the castle's warring past when we visited a room high up in the tower, which during the Civil War had served as a Parliamentarians' meeting room, immune from eavesdroppers. From the roof we had a panoramic view of the English countryside which, our knowledgeable guide informed us, would scarcely have changed since Tudor times.

The house is home to Lord and Lady Saye and Sele and their family, the Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes (pronounced "Fines") - as it has been for the past 600 years! Ranulph of that ilk is well known, and memorials in the nearby church showed this to be a favoured Christian name among his ancestors too. Other notable members of the family in the past were Celia Fiennes, the 17th-century diarist and William of Wykeham (d. 1404), who founded Winchester College and New College, Oxford. It is also likely that it was a Fiennes lady who rode upon a white horse in nearby Banbury.

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On the return journey stops were made at Bledington Church and Stow-on-the-Wold for tea. Full marks to Amy for arranging a splendid day out!

Eric Miller

MORE EARLY FLYING AT LECKHAMPTON

Monsieur Salmét was the first intrepid airman to land in Leckhampton, on 25 July 1912 at Rowland's Field, Pilley, (Smokesignal No 9), but not the last. 1913 saw 3 more aviation events there, on what subsequently became known as the Aviation Ground or Aeroplane Field. This is now confirmed as being the large field just below where Pilfor Brickworks then were (now Pilford Road), at the top of the Old Bath Road. It is now largely built over.

Sydney Pickles arrived in his Bleriot machine on 27 March and gave flights to 2 ladies, Miss Wilkie and Miss Howard. He was scheduled to give flying displays on 28th and 29th, the Easter weekend, but unfortunately the weather prevented this, so he made up for it on the 30th. Rockets were sent up from the field to attract spectators, lots of whom turned up, blocking the roads around, with a good number assembling on the lower slopes of the hill to avoid having to pay the sixpence charge to enter the field. After one or two short flights around the town Mr Pickles gave exhibitions of figure-of-eight flying and bomb-dropping - with bags of flour. At dusk he gave more displays guided by rockets sent up from the ground, and also took up a few more passengers.

Whitsun saw more aerial activity as part of an annual open-air festival organised by the Pilley Social Institute. Captain Penfold, an Australian who held a Pilot Aviator's certificate of the Royal Aero Club, was scheduled to ascend in a balloon and to make a parachute descent from it on 1 May, Whit Monday. Large crowds gathered but it rained heavily (again) and the whole fête was postponed until the 14th, which turned out to be beautifully fine. Before getting into the basket Captain Penfold gave an account of his ascents and experiences in mid-air, and an illustration of the way in which the parachute was separated from the balloon at a height of about 3000 ft. The fire was then lit and the hot air inflated the balloon. As luck would have it the wind got up at that moment, the balloon swayed from side to side, and sparks set fire to the material. A bucket of water was quickly thrown over it, but too late, there was a gaping blackened hole about 2 feet in diameter in the side of the balloon. This put an end to all thoughts of flying

that day, much to the disappointment of all, not least because the Captain had promised to drop prizes worth up to 10/6d each on toy parachutes from the balloon. Captain Penfold said he would try and make another attempt before leaving the area, but nothing further was heard of it. This was the man who was billed as 'having amazed and entertained hundreds of thousands of spectators in Australia, America and England, and whose displays of bomb firing above the American battleships at 'Frisco were something to be remembered.

The third exciting aviation event of 1913 was the arrival on 23 October at the same field of no less than 3 machines of the Royal Flying Corps from the Netheravon Flying School. They were 2 biplanes, one type 'B.H.' and one 'Henry Farman' and a 2-seater Bleriot monoplane, piloted by 3 Old Cheltonians, Lieutenants Porter, Conran and Stopford. A Captain Beor was a passenger. They were combining routine flying training with attending the wedding of Miss Mather, a friend of Lt. Porter, at Christ Church! News of the visit was not made public beforehand, but some of Lt. Porter's acquaintances had passed on the information, so that a number of people turned up to see the airmen arrive, including Inspector Corbett with 3 or 4 officers of the County Constabulary. The Chief Constable also appeared a bit later, as did the grandmother of Lt. Porter. An Echo reporter was there too, and also the boys of Brandon House School, Leckhampton, where Lt. Porter had been a pupil. Many more were soon attracted by the goings-on.

At about 9 o'clock, the expected time of arrival of the aircraft, the fog came down 'like a black wall'. The spirits of the onlookers dropped, but rose again sometime after 10 o'clock when the sun broke through and then, approaching 11 o'clock, the buzzing of the Bleriot's Gnome engine was heard. After circling the adjoining fields a couple of times, the aeroplane made a graceful landing. The 2 other machines arrived a little later, one having flown beyond Cheltenham as far as Cleeve Hill when the pilot recognised the golf links and turned back. He had also had to make an emergency landing at Pewsey en route due to a faulty inlet valve. The planes were roped off while the airmen went to the wedding, and large numbers of people were able to inspect them 'at no charge'. By the time they took off at around 3-15pm hundreds of spectators were on the field.

This was the last known occasion on which flying took place from this field, although there were 2 other incidents nearby in the early days of flying. On 13 July 1912, a few days before M. Salmet's appearance, Lt. Fox of the Royal Engineers had landed on the East Gloucestershire sports ground in Old Bath Road. Local residents were very surprised to see

his aeroplane suddenly swoop down, unannounced. He was making a trial flight on a Farman machine from Salisbury Plain to Cheltenham and back, in order to qualify for the Aero Club's certificate. This entailed flying 100 miles in 5 hours, and as Cheltenham was about 50 miles from his starting point, he chose this town for his brief call. He set out on his return journey inside 10 minutes with the help of some interested local people.

On 13 August 1917, during the First World War, a military plane made a crash-landing on the College cricket ground. Lt. Stewart, an Old Cheltonian, had lost his bearings and was having engine trouble when he recognised where he was. He managed to bring his machine down, but the framework got buckled and the propeller broken in the process. The pilot was unhurt. Thousands of people were attracted to the ground to view the wreckage.

The First World War saw rapid progress in all aspects of flying, so that by its end the novelty value had been lost. Large air shows began to be staged all over the county.

Alan Gill

FROM THE EDITOR

Our third Annual General Meeting saw the retirement of the founding Chairman of the Society, who was able to report on a highly successful year, notably the success of our first publication which has put the Society in a very sound financial position. Fortunately John's talents will not be lost, as he remains on the committee, where he has been joined by Rick Kedge. We welcome Amy Woolacott in the Chair and Eric Miller, the new Vice Chairman. At the conclusion of the A.G.M. we had a most interesting talk by Florence Jackson, co-author of 'Walks in Haunted Gloucestershire', published by Sigma Leisure (ISBN 1-85058-403-6).

I have increased the size of the font for this issue, which I hope will make it more legible, though you are not getting as many words! Perhaps we could aim at 8 pages per issue in future, depending on your contributions of course! Copy for December's issue should be with me by 16 November. Finally advanced warning of an extra meeting on Saturday 7 October in Gloucester, organised by the Rural Council Local History Committee; details will be given out at our first meeting of the new season on 21 September.

Roger Richards



smoke signal

NUMBER 13 DECEMBER 1995

Hon. Sec. Alison Merrett
17 Hall Road, Leckhampton
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THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Since my previous message to you we have had three interesting members' evenings; some details are included below. Your committee are striving to speed up the production of 'Leckhampton in WW II', which we hope will be ready in the early part of next year. With this year moving inexorably towards Christmas, I should like to wish each and everyone of you a Merry Christmas and a Joyous New Year.

Amy Woolacott

BRUCE STAIT, 1928 - 1995

The death of Bruce Stait in September came as a great shock to us all and we extend our deepest sympathy to June his widow, his four children and nine grandchildren. The Society's collection for the British Heart Foundation in his memory realised the sum of £54.97, in addition to the £589 collected at Trenhaile's. A founder member of the Society, Bruce worked tirelessly on its behalf, was the first editor of *Smoke Signal* and was the chief editor of our first book, *Leckhampton 1894*. His collection of postcards and his skill at photography were invaluable, and his contribution will be sadly missed.

Bruce was born in Sale, Cheshire, but moved to Essex and attended Colchester Grammar School. He did National Service with the RAF, which was the start of a lifelong interest in aviation. He and June came to Leckhampton in 1953 and he worked in Rotol's drawing office. He was on the committee of the Skyframe museum at Staverton and a member of the Cotswold aircraft restoration group. He took many photographs of the Leckhampton area, including aerial photographs, which will be an invaluable archive for the future. June has graciously accepted honorary membership of the Society.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

A well attended member's evening was held on 19th October with Eric Miller in the chair. Eric and Margaret Miller began the proceedings by giving readings from old Parish magazines. These were some 100 years old and gave a good insight into the life, characters and activities of the village then. The Revd. R E Trye's words of farewell as Rector in 1888 were recorded, giving way to the Revd. Clifford Aston, whose energy led to the formation of numerous new organisations in the village - sporting and social as well as religious. His outstanding achievement was

LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

the erection of the Parish Hall, with its (now defunct) clock. This is described in more detail in the article below.

Joan Launchbury brought along two photographic records of Leckhampton, one 'then' and the other 'now'. The 'then' pictures were over 20 years old and the 'now' were taken from the same places, so the changes were easy to see. After this Terry Moore-Scott showed slides and spoke about excavations of what is the only known Romano-British settlement in the flatlands, the exact location of which is confidential. He displayed artifacts found at the site which he had borrowed.

Daphne Wheeler gave a brief taste of Victoriana (again 1880's and before). Several items of clothing, a farmer's smock, Christening robes, a baby's dress and a Victorian nightdress were on display; also a selection of ceramic jelly moulds from her collection of 140, some dating back to the 1860's. The great variety of designs and the ones with holes for curd cheese making were of interest.

All members present were agreed that it had been a fascinating evening. It now remains to seek out other members' contributions to local history.

The speaker at the meeting on 16th November was Aylwin Sampson, co-author with Dr Steven Blake of A Cheltenham Companion and well-known for his drawings of local scenes in the Echo. His subject was Visual Treasures of Leckhampton. He covered the whole area of the historic parish, pointing out buildings with interesting architectural features. Leckhampton Hill, as well as fine views, has Tower Lodge and Tramway Cottage. A cottage, which was the boyhood home of the explorer Edward Wilson, is in the Crippetts. In the old village centre, as well as the Church and the Court, the Lodge and the old School House (now the dining room) are of interest. The bell turret and the gates of the Village Hall received special mention; also the Delancey Hospital, which was designed by John Middleton, who also designed St Philip and St James's Church.

Mr Sampson mentioned several fine houses in the Park and in the Leckhampton Road, and also drew attention to many interesting survivals in the Bath Road shopping area, including the cast iron mile post and the shop front of Odd Bins, which is 120 years old. The talk should serve to make us more observant as we move around the parish.

Daphne Wheeler

THE PARISH HALL AND ITS CLOCK

It is now 100 years since a subscription list was opened for the building of the Parish Hall. This therefore seems a good time to review its beginnings, especially as the management committee is starting an appeal to replace the clock, which is no longer in working order.

It is thanks to the vision and energy of the then Curate-in-Charge, the Revd. Clifford Aston, that the Parish Hall was built,

taking less than 18 months from design to completion. The following quotations from his reports in the parish magazines of the time give us something of the flavour of his crusade, for which we have every reason to be grateful today. The story began in November 1895, when a concert to raise money to pay off the debt still outstanding from the building of the National School was held, as was usual in the absence of any other suitable venue, in the schoolroom itself:

"It was unfortunate that the room was not capacious enough to hold all who wished to be present. But you will kindly take this as a strong and pressing argument for the erection, as soon as possible, of a *Parish Hall*, which, in these days, is positively essential to progressive Church work. I have received a donation of £50 for this purpose, and have opened a fund in the Post Office Savings Bank. £300 will, I believe, suffice to supply such a room as we want, and what a privilege is theirs, who have it in their power to give a good round sum to so helpful a work!...."

In January, 1896, Clifford Aston wrote with typical enthusiasm:

"Yes, we have got a site for our *Parish Hall*, and shall lose no time in getting it up. Mr Prothero has designed the building, and Messrs Ticehurst have conveyed the land, and no architects' or lawyers' fees to pay them!! This promises well for the future. £600 will take some getting, for we are going to build for posterity as well as for ourselves, and we mean to have a really good-looking stone edifice....."

In November, 1896, he reported that a Bazaar for our Parish Hall had been attended with much success. He singled out Sir John Dorington for his "witty speech into the *Phonograph*" - which would certainly have been a great novelty to all present. He had to admit that the building itself was progressing "rather quietly", and it was unlikely to be occupied that year. Early in 1897 an extension of land was purchased to provide 20 feet more frontage and 12 feet more depth, offering "space for a carriage to sweep up to the door".

It was on 26th April 1897 that the first event was held in the Hall, a grand concert in aid of the National School. It was described as "most enjoyable, and of a high-class character". The celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in June 1897 seems to have overshadowed its delayed start, though the Hall was considered one of the permanent memorials of the Queen's reign.

The concert brought in a mere £8 towards the building costs. Clifford Aston's early estimates of £300 and £600 had evidently been conservative; the final figure, which was paid off in 1904, was nearer £900.

The Revd. Clifford Aston was also pleased to report that "the Queen's Day also saw the new clock going - a great acquisition for the Parish". He had announced in February that a clock, to be placed in the turret or at the north-east end, had been presented by "a lady well-known to most of us". Remarks

made by her and quoted in the parish magazine would have left readers at that time in little doubt of her identity: "It gives me great pleasure to give it to the parish in which I have resided since...St Philip's and St James's was consecrated in 1840, and from the inhabitants of which I have received so much kind and faithful attention". An obituary printed in May 1901 confirmed her to be Mrs Margaret Riddle, widow of the first Vicar of that church.

As we now know, it was decided to locate the clock at the north-east end of the hall (on the wall facing Church Road) rather than in the turret. It is of interest that by August 1904 it had been decided to charge for the use of the Parish Hall, not only to meet the expense of cleaning and repairs, but also to cover *the winding up of the clock*". It is a shame that this "great acquisition for the parish" should have stood still for so long, its hands permanently at 18 minutes past 12. Good luck to the appeal for a new one, which will not need winding!

Eric Miller

LECKHAMPTON - MY CHILDHOOD HOME

With ancient hill, old church and house,
a place beyond compare
With woods and fields where children played
without stress or care.
Here I was born and spent childhood days,
happiest times in so many ways.
They were years of peace and war,
with all the hopes and fears,
But good folk all around to share
the laughter and the tears.
I treasure much the Leckhampton folk
of that far off day,
Who, with words of wisdom, kindly acts,
helped me on my way.

George Capper

FROM THE EDITOR

We welcome the following new members who have joined since the last list was published in *Smokesignal* No 11:

Mr & Mrs J Breddy, Mr & Mrs D Horwood, Mr & Mrs R Lacock,
Mrs M Young.

In addition to Bruce Stait, we have to record the deaths of three other members: Jack Bubb, Eric Lipson and Dr Bruce Wallace. We offer their families our sincere condolences.

Copy for the March '96 issue should be submitted by 15th February to me 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

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NUMBER 14 - MARCH 1996

Hon. Sec. Alison Merrett
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THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

At its meeting on 31st January the Committee decided that it would be useful to compile a register of members' interests, including any projects they may be engaged in or would be willing to join. A proforma is enclosed for completion by those who wish to do so, preferably by the members' meeting on 21st March. We can then put members with shared interests in touch with each other.

Amy Woolacott

ULLENWOOD MANOR

At our January meeting Mr G L Newsum spoke about the history of Ullenwood Manor, where he had worked for many years. Ullen Wood is thought to be a corruption of Owlenn wood (wood of the owls). The area includes a Roman settlement on the Hill with an ancient track down to Shurdington. The 1777 manorial map and early Ordnance Survey maps show Ullen Farm on the site of the present house, which was built about 1860 by William Hall, a cotton magnate from Lancashire, for his daughter, married to Henry Bubb. He himself had built Sevensprings House in 1840. He was one of the first car owners, having two Cadillacs, one with the number plate AD 3, which were used as ambulances in the first World War.

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In the second World War the house and chapel were used by the American military hospital built in the grounds of Ullenwood Court. In 1947 the manor house became a hotel and in 1949 a preparatory school, which folded in 1960. In 1962 the house became a school for disabled children. The present Star Centre, a college of further education for disabled students founded by Lady Cripps (wife of Sir Stafford) and Andrew Wilson, opened in 1967 with 40 students. After major alterations and improvements which are still continuing, the Centre now has 120 students, but only 6 from Gloucestershire.

ORAL HISTORY

At our February meeting Mr Ian Harris, who works on recordings for talking newspapers, spoke to us about the recording of oral history. Whilst written records can be altered or forged, recordings, once made, cannot be further exaggerated or embellished. Mr Harris stressed the importance of thorough preparation of equipment layout and line of questions; it is useful to get to know the subject well in advance. It is better if no one else is present in the room when the recording is made. He played recordings of various old characters who talked of their school days and earlyworking life, showing the value in preserving material that could never have been written down, particularly dialect.

Daphne Wheeler

THE VILLAGE DOCTOR, 1920

Those who have had occasion to visit the doctors' surgery at Lloyd Davies House recently will have noticed some interesting framed photographs of historic Leckhampton.

The collection was put together by John Randall and the late Bruce Stait, while Fred Lea has done the framing.

We thank the medical practice for suggesting the idea. Patients should be cheered by the scenes, and the Society will have fulfilled its objectives of collecting material and information concerning the history of Leckhampton, studying and publishing that information and stimulating public interest in local history.

Readers may be interested in the tributes to Dr Lloyd-Davies, after whom the surgery is named, which appeared in the Parish Magazine for April 1920. Headed "Our Village Doctor", their tone vividly evokes the spirit of Leckhampton 5 years ago:

"We can see him now ... : the little familiar grey car; a bright glance and a smile brimming up from somewhere behind the "bonnet"; a wave of the hand as he passes round the School corner; the "chug, chug" of the engine as he vanished out of sight - the village doctor on his rounds. Ours - yes, because everybody knew him: not a dog which did not welcome him at a home of sickness; not a child whom he did not assist to make its first bow in this strange and wonderful world; hardly a traveller on his way out of it for whom he has not eased the journey; ours by endless acts of kindness, mingled by way of wholesome tonic with wise advice (like the wonderful ingredients of a prescription); these things made him not a physician, but a friend ... We can see how latterly the strain of work told on him, never a very strong man: a batch of heavy cases involving all night sittings made him a dangerously easy prey to the illness it was his life's work to combat."

Further words of appreciation were provided by Dr McAldowie, a fellow medical officer at the Red Cross Hospital at Leckhampton Court, where Dr Lloyd Davies had served from 1915 to 1919. He wrote: "In spite of the demands on his time made by a large practice, he kept abreast with the many new methods of treatment which came with almost overwhelming rapidity from the Army Medical Headquarters in France. His special acquaintance with

fevers, acquired as physician to the Delancey Hospital, proved most valuable in the diagnosis and treatment of the obscure febrile diseases originating amongst soldiers in the trenches and on the battlefields ... The staff and patients of the Hospital will remember that they never appealed in vain to him for help and kindly interest in their difficulties ... A man to be trusted, honoured and imitated, whose loss will be deeply felt and truly regretted, was this ever kindly friend and physician."

Eric Miller

FROM THE EDITOR

We welcome the following members who have joined the Society since last December:

Mr K G Cooper, Mrs C Evans, Mr and Mrs Jewell,
Mrs C A Mitchell, Miss J B Nash, Mrs M A West.

Copy for the June issue should be submitted by 16th May to me at 28 Church Road. Copies of previous issues are available at 20p each from John Randall, who also has a stock of books for sale.

As always visitors and prospective members are very welcome at our meetings, which are held on the third Thursday of the month in Church House, Painswick Road. The annual subscription is £3 (individual) or £4.50 (joint) and a 50p donation is requested at each meeting attended.

Roger Richards

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smoke signal

NUMBER 15 - JUNE 1996

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

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Enclosed with this issue of *Smoke Signal* is the notice of the forthcoming Annual General Meeting, to be held on 20th June 1966. You are asked to bring with you the Society's Rules and Constitution, 1st April 1995 issue, because some amendments are to be proposed. As will be noted, I have decided, for personal reasons, to stand down as Chairman, but I am confident that you will give my successor your support.

Amy Woolacott

MEMBERS EVENING

A Members Evening was held on 21st March, which began with publicity for forthcoming events. Apart from the 60th anniversary of the Gloucestershire Records Office, which was celebrated on 20th May, the remaining items are listed on the back page under forthcoming events.

The meeting continued with Eric Miller showing slides of lithographs and engravings of Leckhampton Court as it was in 1793, with gardens at the rear and the banqueting hall. He also showed engravings of the church in 1330 after its first enlargement paid for by Sir John Giffard, of the 1834 vestry paid for by Charles Trye and a wood cut of the church in 1863 by Henry Davies.

Terry Moore-Scott then put forward some ideas on the second manor in Leckhampton, comparing it with a similar situation in a parish near Bristol.

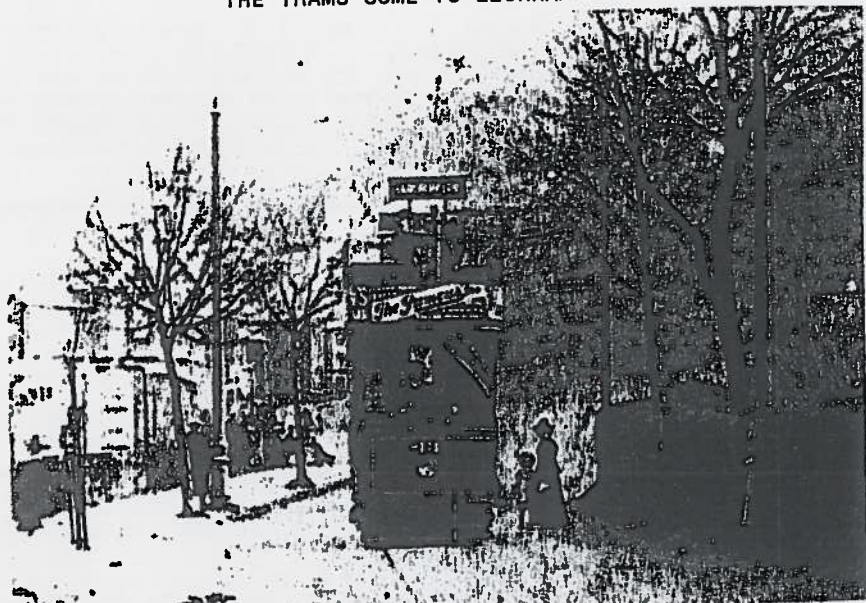
Amy Woolacott concluded the meeting with a report on her research into routes, roads and paths, and their names. Many of the tracks are 10,000 years old and were originally used by animals. The Wessex Ridgeway was in use before Roman times. The Romans constructed many of the roads and made maps. Roman roads were at least 5 feet wide for soldiers and military transport, and double width for two-way traffic. The roads were well drained and so have lasted, and many are still in use, though they were allowed to decay in Saxon times.

In the middle ages there was more trade, and better roads and bridges were built for merchants and pack horses. The bridges were of wood or stone, and some had chapels for travellers to rest in. Hermits used to live by bridges and collect tolls. In 1180 Henry I enacted a law that roads had to

be wide enough for 16 knights to ride abreast, or 2 wagons to pass. Travellers were in danger from robbers; and wolves till about 1300. Later the upkeep of roads fell to manors and they were better repaired. Under the 1555 Highways Act parishioners had to work under highway surveyors for 4 days a year unpaid to repair the roads. From 1663 tolls were levied on turnpike roads and the money used to pay for their repair. The quarries were paid £1 for 3 cubic metres of stone from "Shurdington Hill", and children were paid 2d for a large bucket of smaller stones.

Daphne Wheeler

THE TRAMS COME TO LECKHAMPTON



The Cheltenham tramway system, inaugurated in August 1901, was extended to Leckhampton (and Charlton Kings) in 1905. The first sod of the extension work was turned, without ceremony, in Leckhampton Road on 28 September 1904, 6 months being allowed for completion of the work. Almost all the materials used - granite setts, rails, poles, wire, fish-plates, tiebars, bolts, wood blocks, cement, and cable - were of British origin or manufacture, and 8 new tramcars were purchased from the Thomas-Houston Company of Rugby.

The official inspection of the extension was undertaken exactly 6 months later, on 28 March 1905, by Major J.W. Pringle RE, on behalf of the Board of Trade. He rode in one of the new trams, number 13, accompanied by various interested parties, including Mr J.D. Bendall, Chairman of the Streets and Highways Committee.

Number 13 set off from the High Street at 10.30am with the Inspector in the bows of the upper deck. After adjusting his

monocle, progress began, round Cambray and up Bath Road to the terminus at the junction of Leckhampton Road and Old Bath Road. There were spectators all the way, looking on with pleased wonderment, while butchers', bakers', and fishmongers' horses looked askance at the strange vehicle. Near the Norwood Arms a white collie dog rushed forward and indignantly barked. Just before reaching the terminus a pair of horses in a brake, hailing from Bisley, shied on to the turf as they passed the tram, but the driver soon pulled them up. The outward journey was completed in 15 minutes, and after a brief halt, the return commenced. On passing Burnbrae a Union Jack was noticed flying in honour of the event, and lower down Leckhampton Road Mr Charles Hall, a veteran Leckhamptonian, was observed outside his residence saluting the occupants of the tram in a friendly manner. Still further down, at St. Phillips Schools, the girls were all clustered against the playground railings cheering and waving. Cambray was safely reached after a smooth journey, well within half an hour of the start.

Before leaving Cheltenham the Inspector informed Mr McCormick, General Manager of the tramway company, that he could not officially pass the extension there and then, but, unofficially, he saw no objection to opening the lines forthwith for traffic. Accordingly, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, there was a civic opening of the line. Two of the new trams were used, number 13 leading the way. No bunting was carried and there was little in the way of ceremony, the Mayor simply releasing the bar which put the cay in motion, and then leaving it to Mr McCormick. Mr McCormick's little boy presented a pretty bouquet to the Mayoress in honour of the occasion. Upon arriving at the Leckhampton end of the line the Mayor and Mayoress got off and went home to their house in the Hill. On its return to the High Street the tram was chased by crowds of boys screaming with excitement and delight.

The trams began running for public use immediately afterwards. A 20-minute service was planned. The first accident occurred only 2 days later when an elderly man, apparently in a fit of absent-mindedness, stepped off a tram while it was travelling at full speed near the College in Bath Road. He miraculously escaped with a few bruises and a general shake-up. He said he thought the tram was going to stop.

The trams continued to run until 31 March 1930 when they were replaced by open-top double-decker buses. Track lifting began a few days later. The trams had come and gone in only 25 years.

Alan Gill

AND THE GAS

On 29th September 1818 Cheltenham was lit by gas for the first time. Oil lamps continued in use, together with some gas, for a number of years. By 1852, 786 lamps supplied at public expense lit the town, but it was not until 1862 that gas light reached Leckhampton, when 400 parishioners celebrated this event with a public dinner. The church was lit by gas in 1885.

ANGELS AND SERPENTS

After listening to Caroline Gilmour's illustrated lecture at our April meeting on the work of the stone masons in the 18th century, a walk through a cemetery or country church and churchyard will prove much more interesting. Our old gravestones are fast disappearing with erosion etc, and, in two decades or so, the only records we shall have of this intricate and delicate carving will be on film. The finest examples to be found in this area are in the Vale of Evesham. Mrs Gilmour suggested that we, as a Society, take our own recordings of the treasures in St Peter's and any local churches. It was not until the 17th century wealth made it possible to buy stone for monuments; much was imported. The magnificent Cirencester Abbey church is a monument of English stonework at its best. By the altar is a fine alabaster tomb with a canopy carved with roses and under it the painted figures of Humphrey Bridges with his wife in a Puritan hat. Carved in the middle of the roof of the Lady Chapel is a cat behind a stack of corn, watching for a mouse.

Joan Launchbury

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 29 June, 1.30-5pm: Campden and District Historical and Architectural Society - "Hidden Campden", audio-visual show and guided tour in groups of ten, including visit to church and tea. Cost £2.75.
- 6 - 21 July: International Festival Fringe Events.
- 29 August, 9.30am-6.30pm: Outing, with Charlton Kings LHS, to Helens at Much Marcle. The house is 600 years old and is still lived in by descendants of the original family. This will be followed by a visit to Ledbury Church and tea at the Three Choirs Vineyard. Cost £7.50.
- 5 October, 2.0pm: Denmark Road School, Gloucester history afternoon.
- 12 October - 18 January '97: Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum William Morris Celebration, centenary of the Arts and Craft Movement.

FROM THE EDITOR

We welcome one new member who has joined since the last list was published in *Smokesignal* No 14: Mrs P Hamilton.

A member asks: does anyone know the truth of whether the footpath behind Mead Road builder's merchants was ever called 'Matey Smith's Lane'? And was he perhaps one of the Smith family who were hauliers in the area early this century?

Copy for the September '96 issue should be submitted by 15th August to me 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

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smoke signal

NUMBER 16, SEPTEMBER 1996

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

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It is a privilege to be asked to take over the Chairmanship of the Society, whose past success is very much due to the dedication of my predecessors and the committee, and I shall try to ensure that we do not lose momentum. A good future programme has already been planned, and a card listing the 1996/97 events is enclosed with this newsletter. I am keen to see the members of the Society undertake further research, so if you have a special interest, can I remind you to fill in one of the appropriate forms at the next meeting. The Society will consider issuing any suitable findings as a "Research Paper". The long-standing project on "Leckhampton World War II" is proving to be a huge task, and your committee has decided that more time was needed to edit the draft satisfactorily. This year's publication will therefore be my own "Leckhampton Yesteryear" - watch out for further details! The Society has recently made two donations to local causes: to pay for a fence to protect the base of the fountain erected by the German POWs - see *Smoke Signal* No 4 - and towards the Village Hall Clock Appeal. We have also presented a complete set of *Smoke Signals* to Leckhampton School, to encourage interest in local history among the young.

Eric Miller

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At the Annual General Meeting held on 15th June, following the usual reports from the Chairman and the Treasurer, some amendments to the Constitution were passed. These were designed to enable us, for example, to make grants for projects such as the Village Hall Clock appeal which may be regarded as 'local history in the making', to vary the annual subscription without the need to make a formal change to the Constitution, and to change the month for the AGM from June to May. Eric Miller was elected Chairman in place of Amy Woolacott who was elected Vice Chairman. David Cox joins the Committee in place of Rick Kedge; the other members continue unchanged.

After the conclusion of the business meeting a talk was given by Mr Ray Goodwin on the subject of 'The Wildlife of Leckhampton', accompanied by his recordings of Cotswold sounds. These were mainly bird songs, but included a fox cub devouring a rabbit in its burrow and other animal sounds. It was disturbing to learn that several sounds such as the nightingale and the corncrake have not been heard for some years in these parts. Farming methods are partly responsible; old barns converted to houses are responsible for the demise of the barn owl and swallows.

LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

FRANK WEBLEY, LECKHAMPTON PHOTOGRAPHER

If you want to send a picture postcard of Leckhampton nowadays the only view to be found in the shops is of the Devil's Chimney. It was not always thus. In the heyday of sending postcards, from the turn of the century until the First World War, there were numerous views to choose from, issued by a multitude of publishers, both national and local. Leckhampton had its very own photographer and postcard publisher in Frank Arthur Webley.

From 1910 until 1916 he kept a sweetshop and tobacconists next door to the present Post Office (now C & J Stores), at the time known as Commerce House, and later numbered 151 Leckhampton Road. It also had a tea room attached. In fact, in its first appearance in the Cheltenham Directory of 1908 the business was listed as the Café Royal. All Webley's known postcards, of which 37 have been identified, were postmarked between 1910 and 1916, and were presumably sold in his shop. They form a very good and fascinating pictorial record of the village during this relatively short period. The subjects range from the Church, the Court, the Hill, the quarries, street scenes, picturesque cottages and farmhouses, to events such as the 1911 Coronation Bonfire and the first aeroplane to land locally in 1912. They also feature local clubs such as the Football Club, the Girl's Club, and the Golf Club. More may await discovery. A typical example is reproduced below, believed to be of Sheepshed / Sheepshed Row Cottage, Kiddnappers Lane, before it became derelict and was rebuilt. Can any reader confirm this, or suggest an alternative site?



A Postcard by Frank Webley of an 'Old Cottage Leckhampton'.

Webley was born at 22 Sun Street in Cheltenham (off Tewkesbury Road) on 13th April 1866, the son of James Webley, a general labourer, and Ann, née Joyner. It is not known what his occupation was until, at the age of 44, he took the shop on Leckhampton Road in 1910. He does not feature in the local directories before this date. In 1916 he moved into the corner shop next door, then known as Malvern Grocery Stores, with the Post and Telegraph Office attached, and took on the duties of Sub-Postmaster of Leckhampton. (The Post Office had been transferred from the building at the junction of Church Road and Hall Road in 1910). He soon gave up the grocery side of the business, which moved to Commerce House, retaining the Post Office together with the sale of stationery.

Webley stayed as Sub-Postmaster until his death, aged 66, on 28th October 1932 after a long illness. His widow, Alice Edith, continued to run the Post Office for another 5 years. There was a large turn-out for his funeral at Leckhampton Church, with no less than 43 floral tributes. He apparently had no children. His wife lived until 1958 when she was 86. The couple are buried in the same grave in the churchyard, between the church and the cottages (plot A250).

It would be nice to find a photograph of the man himself. If anyone has any further information, I would be very interested to hear about it.

Alan Gill

THE COUNTRY POTTER'S ART

This was the title of the illustrated talk given at our May meeting by Helen Brown, Keeper of Cheltenham Museum, covering the potteries at Cranham, Leckhampton and Winchcombe. In the early 19th century there were thriving potteries at Cranham which closed in 1880 but reopened 1938-48. In Leckhampton at the turn of the century flower pots and candlesticks, known as Cotswold Pottery Greenware, were made on the Fairfield estate, Charlton Lane until 1910. There was also a brick works at Pilford.

The Winchcombe Pottery at Greet was owned by Becket of Becket's Lane and was also on a brick yard. It was closed in 1916, but was started up again by Michael Cardew, who had trained under Bernard Leach at St Ives. Michael Cardew spent 13 years at Winchcombe, making slip ware: the earthenware pot formed of local clay was dipped in a cream slip and the bottom half further dipped in an iron glaze to produce a rich orange colour. Chevrons and circles were painted over the glaze to provide a simple decoration. Jugs were copies of the harvest jugs filled with cider, used by farm workers. Elijah Comfort and Charlie Justin, potters from the Becket days continued to make flower pots and milk pans. Later, in 1935, bread plates, porridge bowls and jugs in slip ware appeared. Plates and chargers were made in green, a lead glaze making this new colour possible.

Ray Finch and his son Paul now own and run Winchcombe Pottery Ltd. Ray was a student of Michael Cardew and has worked there since 1936. He is now 84 years old and has been made an M.B.E.

Joan Launchbury

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

15 September, 10.0am to 4.0pm: Open day at Great Witcombe Roman Villa, including the Archaeology Roadshow, at which a panel of experts will be on hand to identify any coins, pottery and any other finds that you may have found in the county of Gloucestershire. This is not restricted to the Roman era, but is open to all periods of the County's history. Further information from the Cotswolds Countryside Service on 01452 425674.

5 October, 2.0pm: Denmark Road School, Gloucester history afternoon.

12 October - 18 January '97: Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum William Morris Celebration, centenary of the Arts and Craft Movement.

FROM THE EDITOR

We welcome Anne Goodrich who has joined since the last new member was notified in *Smoke Signal* No 15.

Copy for the December '96 issue should be handed to me at the meeting on 21st November at the latest, or sent to me at 28 Church Road before that date. I hope that we can expand the rather limited number of contributors we have had recently, but many thanks to those stalwarts who have kept the smoke spiralling. We also welcome letters to the Editor or readers' queries, and the answers to them. I have received no answer to the query about 'Matey Smith's Lane' in the last issue.

A reminder that back numbers of *Smoke Signal* are available from the Treasurer, Tom Hewlett @ 25p per copy with discounts negotiable for multiple copies. We also have a supply of books for sale, held by the Chairman but usually available at the monthly meetings:

Leckhampton 1894 (only 4 copies left)	£3.50
Leckhampton Through the Ages by Eve Andrew and Eric Brewin	£1.50
The History of Leckhampton Church by Eric Miller	£1.50
Old Leckhampton by David Bick	£8.95

I look forward to seeing you all at the first meeting of the new season on 19 September. I was unable to come on a Thursday last year because of evening classes, but I am glad to say these have now been switched to Tuesday.

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

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smoke signal

NUMBER 17, DECEMBER 1996

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

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It is encouraging to see such good attendances at our meetings so far this season. Do let us know if you have any suggestions for future speakers or topics. Contributions from yourselves would be especially welcome, as members' evenings have proved to be popular and enjoyable. We ought also to be doing more towards recapturing the recollections of older inhabitants of the village. A grant would be available towards the purchase of some recording equipment, but the committee is reluctant to apply for one unless we could be certain of finding volunteers to do 'interviews' and - most important - process the results. If anyone is interested in helping, do please let me know.

Don't forget to book for the Christmas Party on 5th December, with buffet and entertainment - see last page.

Eric Miller

LECKHAMPTON YESTERYEAR

VILLAGE LIFE, 1888 - 1939

Read about village fêtes and entertainments, Sunday School outings by horse-drawn carriage, 'fifty thrifty British housewives charabanging off to Worcester,' smoking concerts, *tableaux vivants*, practical recreation classes, the enlargement of the village school, the Parish Library, hospital egg days, bandage parties, the Mothers' Union, the Men's Society, the Scouts, the Church Lads' Brigade, Girls' Friendly Society, cricket and football clubs and advertisements for local shops. The book is full of curiosities, with something for everyone, not only for its factual accounts but for the portrayal of the attitudes and opinions of the time, which it is instructive to compare with our own.

Our big publishing event has been the launch this month of *Leckhampton Yesteryear*. 750 copies have been printed and are already selling well. With 92 pages, including some illustrations, the book is on sale at Leckhampton Post Office and the main bookshops in town, priced at £2-50. However, members are encouraged to make their purchases through the Society, to ensure that it retains the profit! The book can be obtained at meetings or direct from the author, Eric Miller, at 20 Collum End Rise, tel. 526461.

LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

SUMMER OUTING, 29 AUGUST

On a day when large parts of England were suffering from severe storms, members joined Charlton Kings Local History Society on their summer outing in sunny weather to visit Hellen's at Much Marcle, a substantially Tudor/Jacobean house with earlier fragments begun in 1292, and still occupied by the original family's descendants. The mellow brick building houses many portrait paintings, tapestries, arms and armour, and copious family memorabilia, and our voluble, witty guide related the historic events, gossip and legends that have punctuated the life of Hellen's. A lunch stop was taken at Ledbury, where interest is derived from such buildings as the 17th C. timber-framed Market House, St Katherine's almshouses begun in 1232, and the 16th C. Feathers Hotel used by Cheltenham to Aberystwyth mail coaches in the early 19th C. St Michael's church, partly hidden behind the Market House and reached via a medieval alley, has a 200-ft detached bell-tower and a long nave, where a wealth of monuments can be found. The day continued with a visit to Kempley's churches with their contrasting ancient and modern styles. At the tiny 13th C. St Mary's, set in its timeless rural churchyard, there were glimpses of the splendid medieval wall-paintings; at 20th C. St Edward's of local sandstone set with sculpted stone reliefs, the notable carved and painted woodwork of Gloucestershire craftsmen. The very enjoyable outing was rounded off with a cream tea at Three Choirs Vineyard, and our thanks go to CKLHS.

Amy Woolacott

THE NEW SEASON

The first two meetings of the 1996-97 season set a very high standard. On 19th September Russell Howes, a former postman, gave a fascinating talk on the postal service in Gloucestershire before the advent of the universal penny post in 1840, with the introduction of stamps for the pre-payment of postage. Previously recipients had to pay the postage and also collect their letters from the post office. Delivery was later made in towns, but only became universal in 1897. Mr Howes spoke about the early history of the post, from the time of Henry VIII when it was for the carriage of Government letters only, through the Government postal monopoly introduced by Charles I, when letters were carried by horsemen known as 'postboys', and described the routes used by the mail coaches in the 18th and 19th centuries.

At the members' evening on 17th October we were joined by Sir Robert Hunt, who spoke about his early memories of Leckhampton, and about his mother's family, the Cottons, who kept the Malvern Inn where his mother was born. Rick Kedge presented his research on the probable existence of a windmill behind St Peter's church, and Terry Moore-Scott spoke about the manor of Leckhampton and the complicated dynastic arrangements affecting its ownership in the 16th century. Both these items are reported separately in this issue. Finally John Randall gave us an update on the map collection and his future plans.

LECKHAMPTON MANOR

Local history research can produce unexpected snippets with often a human flavour. Why was it, for example, that in the early 1500's, when the Norwoods held the principle manor of Leckhampton, a property survey for the parish shows not Norwood but instead a Henry Knight? The answer is that Roger Norwood, Lord of the Manor, died in 1512 leaving a wife Alice and a young son still in his "nonage" (i.e. a minor). Soon after, Alice married a Henry Knight of Shrewsbury who thus became Raffé's step-father and, by custom of the time, trustee of the manor. Henry Knight's will of 1520 shows he was determined that Raffé should marry one or the other of his two daughters, Jane and Elizabeth, or alternatively his niece, also Jane, since various bequests were conditional on such a marriage taking place. Nor was he disappointed, because a Norwood pedigree of 1623 shows that Raffé did indeed marry a daughter of Henry Knight but, frustratingly, her name is missing! As might be expected, Knight was quite a wealthy man since his will refers to a "great chain of fine gold" weighing 30 oz., "flowers" of diamonds, rubies, sapphire and pearls, gilt and silver articles and fur-trimmed gowns of damask and velvet.

MOOREND FARM

Moorend is quite a common place-name (there is another barely one mile away in Charlton Kings) and usually denotes a location at the edge of a marshy or waste area. In Leckhampton's case, the marsh is held to have existed to the west of Moorend Road although its original extent is unknown. Nevertheless, a map accompanying a geological survey of Cheltenham and district published early this century [1] shows an area of peaty bog or moor on the east side of Moorend Brook covering what is today the lower part of Burrows Field and Allenfield. This area now of course has been fully drained, but at that time watercress beds are shown to have existed there.

The earliest reference to Moorend that I have found is in a document dating from possibly the 13th century recording various parcels of land in Leckhampton from which tithes were payable to the Abbot of Cirencester [2]. It contains several references to "Morende" and to two fields called "La Brech" and "Buttes". We know from later sources that these two fields, called the Breach and the Butts, lay side by side along what today is the west side of Leckhampton Road between Moorend Road and Croft Street. It is not until the 17th and 18th centuries that we find any further detail about Moorend and its fields. In addition to the names already mentioned, various terriers of those times [3] refer to other fields in the vicinity like "Ye Moors", "Moorend Grove" and "Moorend Orchard". Even by the time of Croome's 1835 Survey [4], Moorend Grove is still described as boggy land.

Just how long a farm existed at Moorend is not known, although it is reasonable to assume that one at least was established in early times to work the fields in that part of the Leckhampton manor. Crow's map of 1746 [5] shows two sets of buildings in the area, one labelled Moorend, probably the farm,

and a second, slightly to the east and labelled "Tanseys", possibly cottages. Behind Moorend farm was what seems to be a semi-circular pond. The situation appears unchanged in 1778, but by the time of the 1835 survey Tanseys is no longer in evidence. Moorend Farm is shown (as plot 312) with its Home Close (311) and "Yard, fold etc" (313), all three owned by Henry Norwood Trye but occupied by Thomas Weldon, presumably the tenant farmer [6]. Slightly further to the west (roughly where Gordon Road is today) was another plot described as "Farmhouse and Garden" (315) also with its "Yard, fold etc" (314), but these were owned by a Colonel Daubeney (possibly a predecessor of the late 19th century Charlton Kings family of the same name) and occupied by a George James. Overall, the 1835 evidence is that, while the Norwood Tryes still owned and farmed land around Moorend, the fields immediately north of Moorend were at that time owned by Daubeney and presumably worked by his own tenant farmer.

The last recorded detail on Moorend property is a notice of sale of 1842 relating specifically to Moorend Farm and accompanying lands which were said to lie "on two sides of Leckhampton Road" (indicating that the new road had cut through Moorend land) [7]. The farm is described as an "improvable" brick-built house with stabling for five horses, a brewhouse, garden and paddock. An accompanying plan gives us the layout of the farm before the area was sold off eventually to become the new Moorend residential estate (including Moorend Crescent) in the late 1860's. Incidentally, the semi-circular pond of a century earlier still exists behind the farm. The sale notice states that the house and its outbuildings lay approximately one chain and $\frac{1}{2}$ a chain respectively from the road.

What is left of the old Moorend Farm can still be seen today as the building, now divided into three separate homes (nos 17, 19 and 21 Moorend Road), opposite the ambulance station. This identification can be verified if the 1842 plan of the farm is reproduced to match the scale of the present day 1:1250 Ordnance Survey map of this part of Leckhampton (see illustration). The old farm building precisely overlies these three properties (whose frontage incidentally is about 25 yards, i.e. close to 1 chain, from the pavement). The position of the gateway on to the property is also shown. The original outbuildings of the farm are now covered by houses further along Moorend Road.

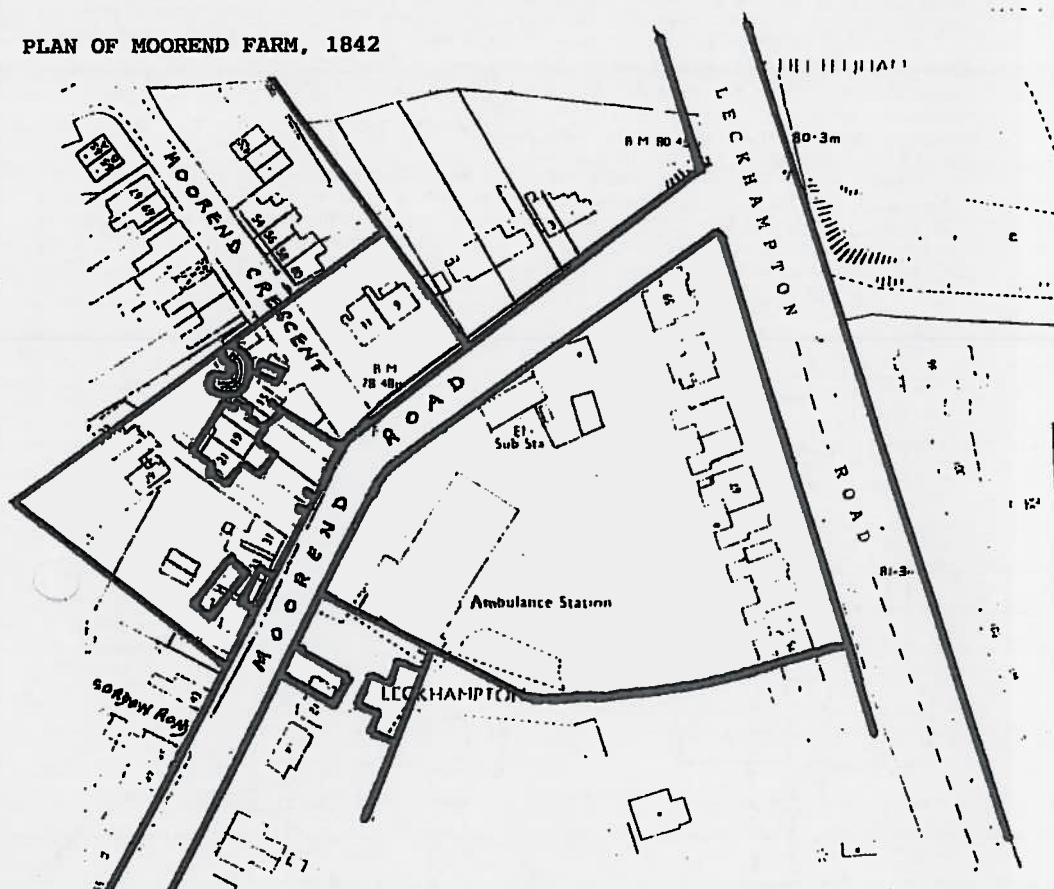
Miss June White, the present owner of no. 19, is certain that nos. 19 and 21 at least were once joined together and claims to have seen deeds for her property dating back to 1712, thus confirming the old age of the existing building. What is also clear is that the 1842 farmhouse was larger than the present building, notably at the front where it appears to have had a large porch or possibly a front wing. Sadly, in the absence of any contemporary drawings, we can do no more than imagine what the original building looked like before it was "modernised" in the 19th century.

Terry Moore-Scott

References

- [1] Proc of Cott Nat FC, Vol XVIII, 1912-14 (PtII) 125-136.
- [2] Cartulary of Cirencester Abbey, Vol 3, p.894, no.438.
- [3] Including GRO D303 E12, also a manor court roll for Leckhampton of 1691 (original in the British Museum).
- [4] GRO P198a 1/1.
- [5] GRO D303 P2.
- [6] Just two years earlier, in 1833, a William Burrows was tenant of Moorend Farm (Smoke Signal no.11, June 1995).
- [7] GRO D1388 SL3, p.88.

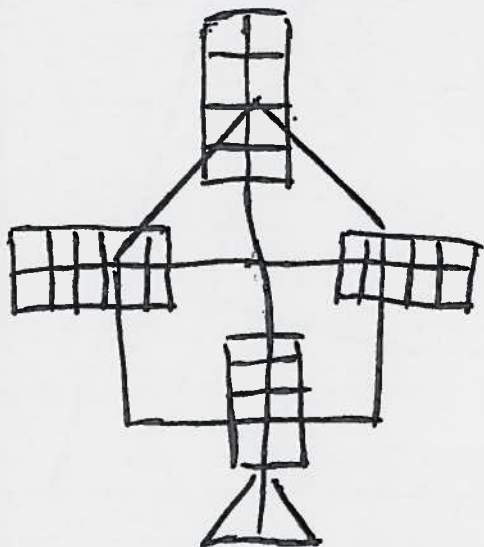
PLAN OF MOOREND FARM, 1842



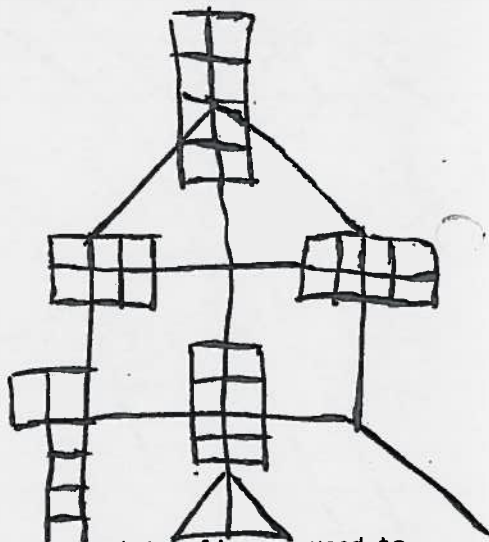
NEWS FROM ST PETER'S PORCH

For some time I have been interested in the graffiti carved in the stone-work in the church porch, and recently did some wax crayon rubbings to try to decipher the confusing shapes and symbols. I was intrigued to find that there are a number of illustrations of parts of windmills as well as two complete windmills, one of which includes, on either side, the ladder and tail pole. I wondered whether the explanation of these graffiti was that a windmill had at one time been visible from the porch, and so I decided to look up the old field names for clues. I was delighted to discover from the 1746 estate map that the field immediately visible from the east porch window was called 'The Mill Hay' (hay being an old word for enclosure). The illustrations are of a type of mill called a 'post mill', from the fact that the body of the mill was pivoted on top of a large oak post and could be turned by means of the tail pole to face into the wind. This is the earliest form of windmill in this country and dates from the mid 12th century. The 1712 engraving of the Court shows that the avenue of trees which leads from the Court to the church was already well-established at that time, and I think it is reasonable to assume that the trees would not have been planted in such a position if the windmill had still been in use. It seems safe to suppose that the mill had either been demolished or moved by the middle of the 17th century. Now, of course, there is no trace of the mill, but there is a flat platform at the highest part of what was the 'Mill Hay', where it may have stood, and there is a large cubic stone at the entrance to the Court, which could conceivably have been one of the five piers on which the base rested. If anyone has any information which might shed further light on our Leckhampton windmill, I would be very pleased to hear from you.

Rick Kedge



1. Normal front view. Sails in 'at home' or 'back soon' position.



2. Artistic licence used to include ladder and tail pole, which would both have been at the back.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The Committee has decided to run a photo competition between now and next November, with the winner being announced at the 1997 Christmas social. The aim is to obtain a selection of contemporary photographs of Leckhampton, taken at various seasons of the year. If the results are suitable, we will consider selecting twelve to illustrate a calendar. There are no restrictions on subject, providing it relates to some aspect of village life: distant or close shots, with or without people are all eligible. Existing photos can be entered, providing the subject has not altered. The size of print is not significant, but the negative must be suitable for enlargement. There will be separate classes for colour and monochrome.

NOVEMBER EVES

November evenings! Damp and still they used to
cloak Leckhampton Hill, and lie down close on the
grey plain, and dim the dripping window pane,
and send queer winds like harlequins that
seized our elms for violins and struck a note
so sharp and low - even a child could feel the woe.

Now fire chased shadow round the room;
Tables and chairs grew vast in gloom:
We crept about like mice, while nurse sat
mending, solemn as a hearse,
and even our unlearned eyes half closed
with choking memories.

Is it the mist or the dead leaves, or the dead men -
November eves?

James Elroy Flecker (1884 - 1915)

BARBARA KING

Mrs Barbara King of Highwood Avenue, who died on 13 September, was a founder member of the Society. She was born in Cheltenham and fairly claimed to be a true Cheltonian, albeit a first generation one. She was educated at Pate's Grammar School for Girls, Westfield College, University of London and the London University Institute of Education. Married in 1946, she left the town to live first in Newcastle upon Tyne and then in Nottingham. Sadly her husband died in 1983 and two years later she returned to Cheltenham.

Very soon after her return Mrs King joined the Cheltenham Local History Society and always made it known that she considered herself part of local history, commenting on the changes that had taken place in the "poor, proud and pretty" town in which she grew up. In 1992 she was elected Chairman of C.L.H.S. and held office until 1995. Although she enjoyed a very wide range of interests in the town, she is perhaps best known for her book "Pates Grammar School for Girls: A History 1905 - 1946, Cheltenham's other Girls' School", published in 1990.

This year Mrs King was due to receive the Arts Council award for history, but sadly died the day before the ceremony. Her award was collected on behalf of the family by Mrs Jean Laycock, the current Chairman of the Cheltenham Local History Society. She is survived by two daughters and a son, to whom we extend our condolences.

FROM THE EDITOR

This issue is double the size of previous ones, thanks to a substantial contribution from Terry Moore-Scott, for which we are grateful. We are always glad to publish the results of original research by members, and we include Rick Kedge's article in that category. Whether we can continue with an eight page Smoke Signal depends on your contributions.

We welcome the following new members:

Derek and Shirley Howard
Geoffrey and Valerie Beddow.

Christmas Social, 5th December. Hurry to buy your ticket (price £3.50, to include buffet, wine and entertainment). Please apply to Eric Miller, 20 Collum End Rise, tel 526461, as soon as possible.

Committee for Archeology in Gloucestershire - Annual Symposium takes place at the High School for Girls, Denmark Road, Gloucester on Saturday 30th November from 10 am to 4.45 pm. Programme will include reports on archeological work in the County, particularly work associated with the road works on the A417. Tickets £3 available at the door.

An addendum to the Constitution, showing the amendments passed at the last AGM, is included with this issue. New members will receive a reprint incorporating the changes.

Copy for the March '97 issue should be handed to me at the meeting on 20th February at the latest, or sent to me at 28 Church Road before that date.

A reminder that back numbers of *Smokesignal* are available from the Treasurer, Tom Hewlett @ 25p per copy with discounts negotiable for multiple copies. We also have a supply of books for sale, held by the Chairman but usually available at the monthly meetings:

Leckhampton 1894 (only 1 copy left)	£3.50
Leckhampton Through the Ages by Eve Andrew and Eric Brewin	£1.50
History of Leckhampton Church by Eric Miller	£1.50
Old Leckhampton by David Bick	£8.95

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

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smoke signal

NUMBER 18, FEBRUARY 1997

Editor: Roger Richards
28 Church Rd, Leckhampton
Tel: 01242 241745

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The Society has now accomplished a major undertaking in the publication of *Leckhampton Yesteryear*. The book has clearly satisfied a need and over 400 copies have already been sold. Members who have not yet bought a copy or who would like to have another can make use of the enclosed order form, which also lists other publications which deal with the locality.

A lot of effort has been put into editing the material collected on Leckhampton during the Second World War, but it seems unlikely that we shall have the resources to turn it into a polished product suitable for sale to the general public, especially now that the 50th anniversary of the end of the war is past. However, your committee wants to do full justice to the contributions, in particular the reminiscences of those who lived here at the time, and we are considering how best to do this.

Smoke Signal continues to provide a platform for those members who are actively engaged in research. This only has space for shortish articles, however, and we hope before long to be able to issue our first "Research Bulletin", with some more substantial articles in it. To start it off, Amy Woolacott has written a paper on the evolution of Leckhampton's street names. There will also be room for articles by other members who may have discoveries or recollections of their own to pass on. In this connection, the "Register of members' interests" will be displayed at future meetings, in the hope that it will enable people with a common interest to share their knowledge, as well as encouraging others to add their names to the list.

Eric Miller

THE COTSWOLD WAY

At our meeting on 21st November John Millington, a warden for over 20 years, and Paul and Sheila Morgan gave an outline of the work undertaken by the Warden Service in the Cotswolds. Covering 790 square miles, it is the largest Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the Country. It runs through 6 counties from Bath, Avon, to Edge Hill, Warwickshire. There are 250 wardens, all volunteers, but kitted out with tools and materials by the Cotswold Countryside Service, based in Shire Hall Gloucester.

LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

This work started 30 years ago and much valuable work has been done in that time, such as patrolling, guided walks programmes and planting new woodland with lime, oak and beech.

On Cleeve Hill an area of 17 acres is being planted with trees and will take three years to complete. The hazards are rabbit and deer. Dog Kennel Wood at Leckhampton Court has been completed. Other work, such as restoring stone stiles, layering old hedgerows, renovating ancient sheep-dips, discovering vanished dew ponds, restoring a Saxon cross at Bisley, clearing litter from car parks etc, are but a few of the worth-while projects being undertaken.

John Millington illustrated his talk with some very detailed slides of the work in progress and the result at the end of the labour. The Cotswolds are known for their idyllic scenery, mellow villages and outstanding natural beauty, and these are the people who care and strive to look after our heritage.

Joan Launchbury

BRUCE STAIT

While on the subject of Cotswold Wardens, members will be pleased to know that a seat in memory of Bruce Stait, a founder member of the Society and the first editor of *Smoke Signal* has been placed by the Cotswold Wardens at Pinswell in Colesbourne Parish.

LECKHAMPTON HILL AS A PUBLIC PARK

This was the subject of another fascinating talk by John Milner on 16th January. He described the geology of the area and the results of quarrying for stone, sand and clay, then traced the history of public access to the Hill and outlined some of the problems we now face in preserving it for the future.

For many years the Trye family of Leckhampton Court who owned the Hill placed no restrictions on access. Paths were established by workers, and people used to walk out from Cheltenham to picnic on the Hill. In the 1890's the family got into financial difficulties and in 1894 the estate was sold. The Hill and quarries were bought by Henry John Dale of the piano firm Dale Forty. He disputed the rights of way and began to fence off paths. Among those affected were the girls of Cheltenham Ladies' College, so the Principal, Miss Dorothea Beale, retaliated by removing all Dale Forty pianos from the school.

In 1897 Dale built Tramway Cottage for his foreman, blocking a well-established right of way, and in 1899 the Leckhampton Quarry Company erected more fencing. Discontent mounted and in 1902 there were riots in which fences were torn down and Tramway Cottage burnt. There were further riots in 1906 when the Cottage was again attacked and demolished. There was considerable public sympathy for the ringleaders, notably from G.B.Witts of Hill House, Chairman of the Rural District Council. The anger of the gentry who lived on the Hill increased when the Quarry Co built lime kilns after World War I and started blasting for stone. However, it was not long before the Company was in financial difficulties and quarrying ceased in 1926. Three years later Cheltenham Borough acquired the Hill for £6,500.

Although the Hill is now secure as a public amenity, it still presents a difficult land management problem. Since animal

grazing ceased the vegetation has grown prolifically, as John Milner illustrated with slides. Paths are in need of repair and the evidence of former industrial use is fast disappearing. We have a major site of scientific interest in our parish, but it is badly in need of money to be spent on it.

MORE ON MILLS

Rick Kedge's article on the possibility of a Leckhampton windmill (*Smoke Signal* no. 17, December 96) reminded me that Leckhampton once also had a watermill.

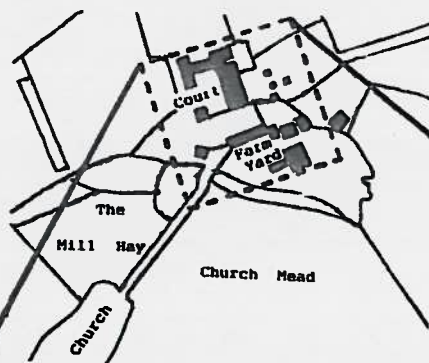
In a 13th century inquisition of the property of lord of the manor Adam le Despencer, it is recorded that "there is there (i.e. in the manor) one watermill and it is worth by the year 4s". Precisely where it was situated is unclear but my suspicion is that it operated from the watercourse we now know as Moorend Brook which rises at the spring line above the Court. Today these springs are partly responsible for feeding the pond in the Court grounds, excess water flowing on downhill via underground culverts. In medieval times there is every chance that a greater volume of water existed, sufficient perhaps to operate a small mill as and when required.

In illustration of this, Kip's 1712 drawing of the Court (see next page) shows a pond located roughly where the existing pond is in the Court grounds but, interestingly, below it and more directly in front of the Court is another, if anything larger, expanse of water covering much of what is now the rather marshy top corner of Church Meadow. The water from this pond or reservoir is depicted flowing vigorously out through a spout or sluice situated near to the top end of the tree-lined avenue from the church and flowing down under that track into what was then known as the "Mill Hay" field. By the 18th century, the old watermill, if it ever was around here, could long before have disappeared. However (as Kip's drawing and Crow's map of 1746 both indicate), the lay-out immediately in front of the Court was then very different from today. A line of outbuildings extended down alongside the drive opposite the Court entrance and, while no obvious mill building is present, one fairly substantial structure standing at the top corner of Mill Hay on the bank of the brook was well situated to have been a mill.

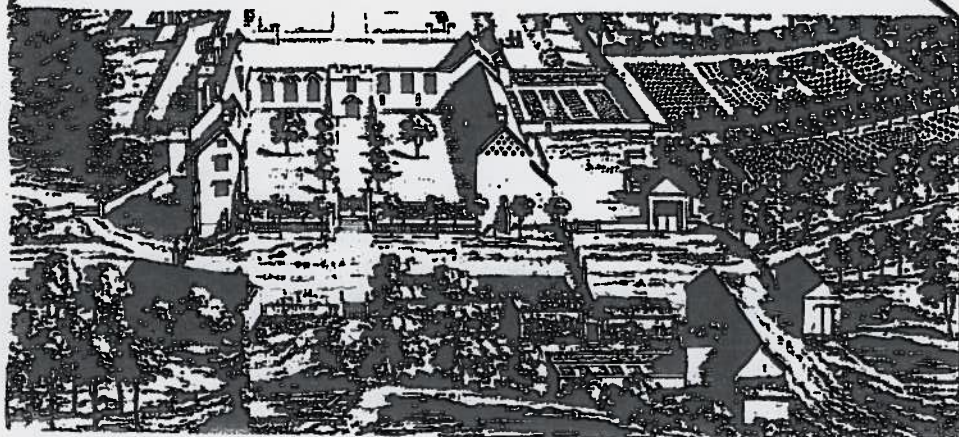
There is though another clue linking the Moorend Brook with milling. Further on down its course, before its confluence with the Hatherley Brook near the Park and on its east side, lay one of Leckhampton's early open fields known as Walkhamstead. This field roughly covered what today is the area around Allenfield and Pickering Road. In the past, the term "walk" was often associated with fulling and fulling mills; the fact that fulling relies heavily on water for its operation could suggest yet another association with milling for the Moorend Brook.

What we don't know is whether this was the location of Adam le Despencer's mill or whether, over the course of Leckhampton's history, there were two mills, one at Walkhamstead and another further upstream nearer to the Court. All of which still leaves us with Rick's recorded graffiti of windmills in the church porch (not to mention the true explanation of the Mill Hay fieldname), but, on windmills, I must defer to Rick. I'm sure there's a lot more to come on this story!

Terry Moore-Scott



LAYOUT IN FRONT OF
LECKHAMPTON COURT,
EARLY 1700's



THE BATH ROAD SHOPS

In 1834 the section of the Bath Road between Hermitage St and Francis St was the grounds of a large house called 'The Hermitage'. By 1855 the area had been re-developed and had been divided into eight properties. It was known as Hermitage Terrace. By 1908 the eight properties had been numbered 75 - 89 (odd) Upper Bath Road. By 1945 this had been changed to the present numbering: 218 - 232 (even) Bath Road.

In 1915 my husband's grandfather, Frank West a greengrocer, bought the premises at 85 Upper Bath Road (now 228 Bath Road). Since 1986 this has been the wine shop, Oddbins. Apart from a 4 year period between 1911 - 1915 when it is believed to have been a laundry, the premises was a grocer's/greengrocer's for over 120 years. In 1863 the shop was the property of Mr Thomas Adams, a greengrocer born in Bedfordshire. Twenty years later Mr Adams called the shop the 'Bath Road Tea Warehouse'.

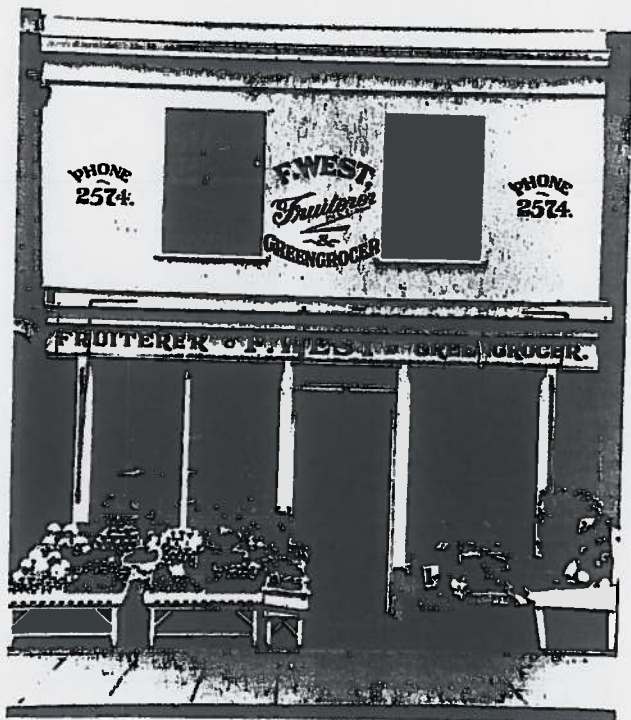
Frank West was aged 41 when he bought the shop in 1915. He had previously worked at Cypher's Nurseries in Queen's Road Barretts the fruiterers in the Bath Road. Frank's wife,

Melina, whom he married in 1916, was for many years a Bible class teacher at Emmanuel Church. When Frank died in 1946 his son Alf took over the business. He was joined in April 1967 by his son (my husband) Don. The shop closed in 1980 when Mr Alf West retired, having been in the West family for 65 years. It is thought to have been one of the oldest shop fronts in Cheltenham.

For the past few months I have been doing some research into the Bath Road Shops, finding out what the shops were used for from the beginning of the century to the present day. This research has been most interesting, and despite the fact that there have been many changes, as would be expected, there are still some shops that have been in the same type of business for many years. The 'Big Fish' is one such shop. From the mid 1920's it has been a fried fish shop. For a couple of years prior to that it was my grandfather's electrical shop (Arthur Chapman) and my father was born there in 1923.

Can anyone help with any information about any of the shops in Bath Road from Thirlestaine Road to the 'Norwood' on either side of the road? I should be most interested to hear from anyone (tel 238893).

Marilyn West



Frank West's shop in 1930

FROM THE EDITOR

From this year we have decided to publish each issue a month earlier than previously, ie in February, May, August and November. This is to enable us to include the notice and agenda for the AGM (itself a month earlier than before) with the May issue. As the AGM is to be held on 15th May, we plan to have the May *Smoke Signal* in your hands by the end of April, so as to give the required 15 days notice of the AGM. You may like to know that the speaker after the meeting will be Geof Capper who will talk about his childhood in the Naunton Park area.

I can now tell you that the evening field trip, which was billed as "to be announced" on the 1996/97 programme card, will be a tour of "historic" Leckhampton in the almost equally historic Number 3 Bus, stopping at various places of interest. Also, it is our turn to organize the joint outing with Charlton Kings Local History Society, which will take place in July.

The first part of the 1997/98 programme has been arranged; the subjects for the latter part of 1997 are:

18 Sep	Mick Kippin on Cheltenham bands and bandstands
16 Oct	Members evening
20 Nov	John Jurica on the Victoria County History
4 Dec	Christmas Social

We welcome the following new members:

Jeremy and Anne Davis
John and Joan Millington
Ronald Walker
John Lansdown
Gordon Wynn

Copy for the May '97 issue should be handed to me at the meeting on 17th April at the latest, or sent to me at 28 Church Road before that date.

A reminder that back numbers of *Smoke Signal* are available from the Treasurer, Tom Hewlett @ 25p per copy with discounts negotiable for multiple copies. We also have a supply of books for sale, held by the Chairman but usually available at the monthly meetings. A list, incorporating an order form is enclosed with this issue.

As always visitors and prospective members are very welcome at our meetings. However, we do expect residents in the area to join, say, after attending two or three meetings as a visitor. The annual subscription is £3 (individual) or £4.50 (joint), and a 50p donation is requested at each meeting attended.

Roger Richards

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smoke signal

NUMBER 19, MAY 1997

Editor: Roger Richards
28 Church Rd, Leckhampton
Tel: 01242 241745

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

After a series of well attended meetings, we are now approaching the close of our year's formal programme. This issue of *Smoke Signal* is timed to give members sufficient notice of the Annual General Meeting, to be held on 15th May, and you will find enclosed a copy of the Agenda. Do make a point of attending, not only to participate in the running of your Society but also to hear Geoff Capper's talk. It is always instructive to listen to the reminiscences of those with first-hand knowledge of the area, as is indicated by the popularity of our recent Members' Evening: after all, it is to promote a better understanding of *Leckhampton's* past that the Society exists.

During the summer our pursuits will be less sedentary. We shall be "beating the bounds" on the evening of 19th June, by vintage bus (thus re-enacting in an appropriate way a historic ceremony which I described in *Smoke Signal* No 11). Then in July I have arranged our Summer Outing, to be held as before in company with our sister society from Charlton Kings. This will include a conducted tour of Pershore Abbey, given (by a fortunate coincidence) by one who was born in Church Road, Leckhampton, followed by a visit to Ragley Hall, which will be opened up specially for our group. A reservation form is enclosed, for your convenience.

Eric Miller

QUAINT AND QUERKY GLOUCESTERSHIRE

This (though spelt quirky according to my spell-check) was the intriguing title of the talk given to our meeting on 20th February by Gordon Ottewell, a teacher and local historian, several of whose books were on sale at the meeting.

His talk was illustrated by slides of photographs which he had taken himself and featured architectural curiosities, many of them ancient stone carvings on churches which the average visitor might not notice. He also drew attention to places of historic interest, such as the birthplace of Dick Whittington near Newent, including the sites of castles and manor houses long demolished.

MEMBERS' EVENING

Another very successful Members' Evening was held on 20th March with several short talks on varied topics. The Chairman began by shedding some light on Leckhampton's oldest inhabitant, buried in 1868 (see article below). John Randall then spoke on the houses on the Leckhampton Road: their dates of construction and their names. His talk was illustrated with slides of old postcards which showed the various stages of housing development. He was followed by Marilyn West, who enlarged on her article on the Bath Road shops in the last issue of *Smoke Signal*. Colin Lea then gave us a summary of the A-level geography project he had just completed at Pates Grammar School on local environmental issues. He drew attention to the threat from developers to the 'white' land between Kidnappers Lane and the Shurdington Road, and invited us to join the Leckhampton Green Land Action Group (LEGLAG). Finally Don Biddle spoke about the Leckhampton Players celebrating their 50th anniversary this year. An article by him on the Players was published in *Smoke Signal* number 10, March 1995.

THE OLDEST MAN IN ENGLAND (1868)

In Leckhampton churchyard lies Richard Purser, who according to his tombstone died in 1868 aged 111. (The grave is to be found some 10 metres to the northeast of the Sanctuary.) At the time of his death he was not only the oldest man in Leckhampton but probably also in the whole of England, though the reckoning of his age varied between 110 and 112.

A contemporary letter written to *The Times* and reprinted in St Philip and St James's Parish Magazine stated that the inscription on the coffin-plate gave his age as 112 years. The writer of the letter offered some pieces of evidence to substantiate his extraordinary longevity, in the absence of any baptismal record for him at Redmarley d'Abitot, of which he was believed to be a native. Among other things Richard Purser himself recalled being taken by his mother at the age of four to see "an illumination in honour of the coronation of King George III" in 1760. He also claimed that he was "fully 40 when he married". His son William, who is buried in the same grave, was allegedly 87 when he died in 1889.

An article in the *Cheltenham Examiner* gave Richard's age by contrast as 110. He had lived in Cheltenham and its immediate vicinity for over half a century, "working as a common labourer down to a few weeks of his death, his scanty earnings having for the last ten or twelve years been supplemented by a grant of £5 annually from the Crown, and by occasional gratuities from his wealthier neighbours, who sympathising with his great age felt pleasure in contributing to lighten his burden".

The Census of 1861 shows that he was living in Suffolk Street, close to St Philip and St James's but within the historic parish of Leckhampton. He was therefore entitled to be buried in the churchyard of St Peter's. Whatever his precise age may have been - perhaps he was in his 112th year - it is interesting to have come across these background details on someone whose tombstone has long been a puzzle.

Eric Miller

Thought Transference.

Miss Nora Dance

ASSISTED BY Mr. W. H. RUSSELL,

would be pleased to give her services for charitable purposes, and at Benefit Concerts, Evening Entertainments, School Parties, &c. and introduce her

LITTLE MYSTERIES

(from 15 to 60-minute performances, as desired)

in which most of the doings of the famous Zanzics, The Howard Brothers, "Hypatia", and other Thought-Readers are re-produced

WITHOUT MESMERISM.

For particulars apply to W. H. Russell, Fairford-lawn, Leckhampton.

Above is reproduced an intriguing postcard advertising "Thought Transference" and other tricks by a Miss Nora Dance, assisted by W.H.Russell of Leckhampton. William Herbert Russell lived at Fairford Lawn, Leckhampton Road, from 1908-1925, and previously at St Hilda, Collum End Road (now Church Road). Fairford Lawn was a house on the corner of Leckhampton Road and Pilley Lane, where the John Wilkins Garage now stands. He was a solicitor and Commissioner for Oaths with an office at 6 Regent Street in Cheltenham from 1892 until 1930, and acted for the Quarry Company and Henry Dale during the Leckhampton Hill rights of way dispute.

The card is not dated, but required a halfpenny stamp which indicates that it was issued before 1918. These performances took place therefore between 1908 and 1918 and probably before the outbreak of war in 1914. I have been unable to discover anything about Nora Dance, nor have I any information on the Zanzics, the Howard Brothers, or "Hypatia".

Russell committed suicide in 1930, at the age of 61. He had been suffering from depression and insomnia. He was survived by his wife and a daughter; his only son was killed in the First World War. He is buried in Cheltenham Cemetery. There is nothing about these performances in his obituary. He was a keen angler and was President of the Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Legal Association in 1920-21. He was an expert on hire purchase and wrote an authoritative text book on it.

It seems a strange thing for a solicitor and Commissioner for Oaths to be involved with, and I would be most interested if anyone knows anything more about it.

Alan Gill

MARGARET BRADSTOCK

We announce with great sadness the death in the Sue Ryder Home of Margaret Bradstock, who had been a loyal supporter of the Society and was one of its original members. We offer our heartfelt condolences to her husband Ivor and their family.

FROM THE EDITOR

In the best tradition of glossy magazines this issue should be in your hands in the month before the one printed on the cover. As explained by the Chairman in his Message we are required by the Constitution to give 15 days notice of the AGM. The card with the 1997/98 programme will be printed after the election of officers at the AGM and will be sent out with the August *Smoke Signal*. In the mean time we repeat the programme for the rest of this year.

18 Sep	Mick Kippin on Cheltenham bands and bandstands
16 Oct	Members' evening
20 Nov	John Jurica on the Victoria County History
4 Dec	Christmas Social

We welcome the following new members:

Patrick Pumfrey
Mrs N.C.Sykes
Dr Graham Meidlinger

Copy for the August '97 issue should be sent to me at 28 Church Road by 25th July.

A reminder that back numbers of *Smoke Signal* are available from the Treasurer, Tom Hewlett @ 25p per copy with discounts negotiable for multiple copies. We also have a supply of books for sale, held by the Chairman but usually available at the monthly meetings. A list, incorporating an order form, was enclosed with the last issue. Rick Kedge (tel 572003) has a hardback copy of *The History of Leckhampton Church* for sale.

As always visitors and prospective members are very welcome at our meetings. However, we do expect residents in the area to join, say, after attending two or three meetings as a visitor. The Treasurer, Tom Hewlett (tel 238617), has the necessary application forms.

Roger Richards

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smoke signal

NUMBER 20, AUGUST 1997

Editor: Roger Richards
28 Church Rd, Leckhampton
Tel: 01242 241745

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

A lot has been going on behind the scenes during the summer, even though we haven't had any formal meetings (apart from the most enjoyable outing in July).

First, great progress has been made with the draft of *Leckhampton during the Second World War*. Amy Woolacott, John Randall and I have finished editing the text, and by the time you read this we shall have worked out which illustrations to include. Then quotations for printing and binding the book will have to be sought. When a price and publication date have been fixed, a subscription list will be opened.

Second, the Society has been successful in its bid for a grant (of £150) from Cheltenham Arts Council, which is intended to cover some of the costs of compiling a portfolio of historic prints and photographs of the village. We hope to publish a selection in due course. The project is being overseen by Alan Gill - see below for further details. The Society benefits from its affiliation to the Arts Council and we now acknowledge this in *Smoke Signal* and on our official correspondence. (I hope, incidentally, that members are not forgetting our photographic competition; it is important to keep a record of what the area is like today, when changes can occur so rapidly.)

Daphne Wheeler and Joan Launchbury have started to compile a scrapbook of newspaper cuttings relating to Leckhampton. This is another aspect of "history in the making", and we look forward soon to seeing the first volumes (working backwards from 1997).

Finally, work of another kind in recording village history has been carried out by Julian Rawes (whose name will be known to many of you). On behalf of the Family History Society, he has been meticulously noting down the inscriptions on the gravestones in Leckhampton churchyard - 800 of them so far. Julian has generously promised to let the Society have a copy of the final print when the task is eventually complete. In the meantime, he has let me have a copy of his computer file, which I can interrogate by name, date or any other feature, on behalf of members. Julian has also agreed to tell members about his work in greater detail, at 2pm on Wednesday 24th September, in the churchyard.

Eric Miller

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council

LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The fifth Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on Thursday 15th May. The Chairman, Eric Miller, reported that membership remains at over 100. We have had a varied selection of talks and are indebted to Joan Launchbury for drawing up the programme. The two Members' Evenings produced some interesting research reports. He thanked all concerned in the production and distribution of *Smoke Signal* and also thanked Daphne Wheeler for her coverage of the Society's activities in the *Echo's Village Voice*. On the book front *1894* is sold out and *Leckhampton Yesteryear* is selling well, but publication of *Leckhampton in the Second World War* has been held up by various factors, including the incompatibility of the computer used for the initial formatting and those now available for editing. Amy Woolacott, John Randall and Eric Miller will form the editorial team, but a lot of work remains to be done.

We have applied to Cheltenham Arts Council for a grant in order to compile an archive of the numerous old photographs and prints of the Leckhampton area known to exist. Anyone with suitable photographs is asked to lend them to Alan Gill for copying. Members were reminded of the photographic competition announced earlier in the year. The Society has good relations with the Cheltenham and Charlton Kings Local History Societies, and with the Leckhampton Green Land Action Group. It has paid for the erection of fencing around the fountain built by Second World War prisoners at Leckhampton Court, and made a contribution towards the new clock on the Village Hall.

The Chairman concluded by paying tribute to the work of the Committee and said that he was confident that we were achieving the objectives set out in our constitution.

The Treasurer reported a satisfactory financial result for the year with excess of income over expenditure of £129-52, largely due to a profit so far of £114-91 from sales of 'Leckhampton Yesteryear'. This has gone into the Publications account with Lloyds Bank, which bears the costs of *Smoke Signal* as well as providing money up front for future publications. The working account with the Chelsea Building Society is not making a profit, so the Committee proposed the following changes which were adopted by the meeting:

From 1st September subscriptions to be £4 single and £5-50 per couple. Visitors will be asked for a contribution of £1 per meeting; the suggested donation for members will remain at 50p.

The current officers and committee members, with the exception of the Secretary, offered themselves for re-election and were duly elected. The Vice Chairman, Amy Woolacott agreed to continue as acting Secretary for the time being. Valerie Beddow was elected to the vacant position on the Committee. Under 'Any Other Business' John Randall asked what was the maximum number allowed in the room from the point of view of fire and safety. [Clarification has been sought from the Church House Booking Secretary. There is no limit laid down but the Chairman will be responsible for dealing with circumstances in a sensible way.]

The meeting was followed by a talk by Geoff Capper on his memories of growing up in Naunton Park in the 1920's and 30's. He has kept a record with photographs of his school days and has even kept his school tie. He ended with a verse from his school song.

THE VILLAGE HALL CLOCK

History was made in Leckhampton Village Hall on Saturday 26th April, when so many local residents gathered to witness the dedication of a new clock to replace the 100 year old one that had graced the Hall wall overlooking Church Road. Alan Wood has mounted this antique clock in a mahogany frame to be hung inside the entrance porch, which now sports a craftsman-made oak door. It was a very happy and memorable occasion, and the former Rector, Canon George Smith, was warmly welcomed by Don Biddle to perform this dedication. In the evening, a capacity gathering packed into the Hall to enjoy a short cabaret and refreshments which the Leckhampton Players had arranged to bring this happy occasion to a joyful conclusion.

Joan Launchbury

SUMMER OUTING

The joint summer outing of the Leckhampton and Charlton Kings Local History Societies took place on Wednesday, 16 July. At Pershore Abbey Jim Brown, the Verger (known to many Leckhampton people as 'Bill'), explained the history of the Abbey and its many unique features. The building, formerly a 10th Century Benedictine Monastery, suffered a series of fires and rebuilds. Today, of the original building, only the Early English Choir and the Lantern Tower remain. In 1540, after the dissolution of the monasteries, local parishioners paid £400 to acquire the former Monks' Choir as their parish church, and what remains today is one of the finest examples of Norman and Early English architecture in the Country.

Throughout its history the Abbey has had many restorations. Current renovations began in 1992 and a recent archaeological excavation has revealed an early Saxon church within the periphery of the existing Abbey. The Abbey bells, a peal of eight, will be featured on BBC2 television 'One Foot in the Past' during the summer.

In the afternoon we visited Ragley Hall, Warwickshire, where the guides gave us a splendid tour. Ragley is the home of the Earl and Countess of Yarmouth and he was given the estate in 1981 by his father, the Marquess of Hertford, who had inherited Ragley in 1940. The Earl, his wife and three children live on the first floor in one wing of the house and his parents live in the opposite wing. Ragley, a stately home, is very much lived in with family photographs everywhere.

The present house was designed by Robert Hooke in 1680, but was not fully decorated and furnished until the middle of the 18th Century. It contains magnificent examples of Baroque plaster relief decorations by James Gibbs and James Wyatt, fine portraits and porcelain. On the walls and ceiling of the South Staircase

Hall is a modern mural, 'The Temptation', designed and painted by Graham Rust. The oval centrepiece on the ceiling depicts Christ's Temptation on the Mount, whilst painted on the staircase walls are portraits of Lord Yarmouth and his sister, their godparents, parents and aunts. One intriguing feature is a 'flying saucer' incorporated into the mural as an inducement to one aunt who was otherwise reluctant to have her portrait painted!

Valerie Beddow

GLOUCESTER BOATMEN

At our April meeting Hugh Conway-Jones spoke about the boatmen working for the Severn and Canal Carrying Company from about 1920 to 1960. Cargo was fetched from Bristol in barges towed by steam tugs to Gloucester docks, where it was transferred to canal boats. The traffic continued up river to Worcester and into the canal system, principally the Worcester and Birmingham Canal and the Stourport, Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. The boats would be towed by tugs as far as Worcester, but from there on horses would be used. The boatmen would be paid by the trip and take their families with them. One would guide the horse on the towpath while another steered the boat. Cargo frequently carried was for the Cadbury's factory in Birmingham, where there were unloading facilities beside the canal. There was increased traffic during the war, because the bombing of the Port of London resulted in transatlantic cargo being unloaded in Bristol and Avonmouth. The canals did not survive long under British Waterways after nationalisation; the severe winter of 1963 brought the traffic to an end.

R C BARNARD'S NOTEBOOK

The Society has been given a notebook compiled in the 1890s by Robert Cary Barnard, the pioneer historian of Leckhampton. We hope to find space for the occasional extract in future issues of *Smoke Signal*. Though much of the notebook consists of manuscript extracts from standard histories and records, not all are readily accessible and it is handy to have them in one place. Some entries are entirely R C Barnard's own, such as a list of noteworthy trees in the parish, some with Latin names and measurements (remember he was the author of the *Botanical Notes for the Working Man* in the Parish Magazine). In other cases he has added his own informed comments. For example, when referring to a survey of the roads in Leckhampton, he says he can offer no explanation for the name "Kidnappers Lane". If R C Barnard, writing only a dozen years after the first recorded mention of Kidnappers Lane on an Ordnance Survey map, was unable to shed light on its origin, then what hope have we?!

(We are grateful to Mrs A M Arkell, of Withybridge, R C Barnard's great-granddaughter, for the gift.)

Eric Miller

"Leckhampton Yesteryear, Village Life 1888-1939"

The author has used a remarkable run of *Parish Messengers*, edited by a succession of eight incumbents to describe community life in Leckhampton for over 50 years. These monthly publications are a veritable goldmine and provide Eric Miller with material for seven chapters. These comprise 'The Parish Magazine', 'The Parish Hall', 'Societies and Recreation', 'Entertainments', 'Peace and War', 'The Church', and finally, 'The School'.

Adverts in the Magazine are used to reconstruct the shops and tradespeople in the village and efforts to enlighten readers on local history and even the work of the Russian police in 1888. The building of the parish hall itself in the 1890s provided a venue for a local library, recreation classes, boys' organisations, the Girls' Friendly Society, and men's and mother's meetings. Village fetes, flower shows and excursions further and further afield illustrate the vitality of community life, invariably supported by well-known families at Leckhampton Court.

Chapter five, 'Peace and War', covers royal occasions of death and coronation and local war efforts from the time of the Boer War onwards. The chapter on 'The Church' focuses on the incumbents, several long serving church officials, special services like Harvest Festivals and additions to the church fabric. Missionary giving to both local and international causes remind the reader that life in Leckhampton was certainly not insular. Finally, the creation of new schools is described in 1906 and, for infants, in 1931.

Eric Miller is to be congratulated on such a lively and interesting use of the parish magazine and the sense of significant historical change over the period from 1888 to 1939 in a community in which everybody had opportunities to share. It is sad that our modern atomic individualism has so often cramped our lives within our own communities. Can we learn from the past?

Bryan Jerrard

MISSING PARISH MAGAZINES

As will be obvious from *Leckhampton Yesteryear*, parish magazines can be a rich source of local history. Some are missing from the Rector's "official" collection. If any member happens to have - or know the whereabouts of - copies from the years 1956 - 1960, 1962, 1964, 1966, please let me know.

Eric Miller

HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS PORTFOLIO

If any members of the Society possess photographs of the village - houses and other buildings, the quarries, the hill, fields, the mineral tramway, passenger trams, buses, the railway station, individuals or groups of inhabitants, events - we would like to borrow and copy them for our portfolio. Good care will be taken and they will be returned as soon as possible. If we decide to reproduce them, due acknowledgement will be given, unless the owner wishes otherwise. Please contact Alan Gill (tel: 519248).

FROM THE EDITOR

As this is the twentieth issue of *Smoke Signal* we are updating the index issued with the tenth. The card with the 1997/98 programme is also enclosed with this issue.

We welcome the following new members:

Mrs Mary Pharo,	Ike and Monica Donnelly,
Mrs Lorna Alcock,	Robert Wilson.

Copy for the November '97 issue should be handed in at the members' evening on 16th October or sent to me at 28 Church Road by 25th October.

A reminder that back numbers of *Smoke Signal* are available from the Treasurer, Tom Hewlett @ 25p per copy with discounts negotiable for multiple copies. We also have a supply of books for sale, held by the Chairman but usually available at the monthly meetings. Rick Kedge (tel 572003) has a hardback copy of *The History of Leckhampton Church* for sale.

As always visitors and prospective members are very welcome at our meetings. However, we do expect residents in the area to join, say, after attending two or three meetings as a visitor. The Treasurer, Tom Hewlett (tel 238817), has the necessary application forms.

Data Protection Act. We advise members that the details of their names and addresses are stored on computer file and will be used for addressing envelopes for distribution of *Smoke Signal* and other information and literature. This information will not be divulged to any outside agency.

Roger Richards

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