



smoke signal

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

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

A Merry Christmas to all our readers, and a Happy New Year, during which we look forward to the completion of a number of our current projects.

First, we shall be judging the entries for our Photographic Competition, which I hope will attract a lot of interesting and artistic views. Details of how to give in your entries will be found later in this newsletter. Don't forget that in due course the photographs will become historic material in themselves and will perhaps serve as sources for future historians - something that Daphne Wheeler also has in mind as she compiles her own collection of contemporary photographs and cuttings.

We are also making good progress with the Portfolio of historic photographs. Alan Gill has copied and indexed over 150 photos, mainly from private collections, including the late Bruce Stait's. He will also have access to the collections in Cheltenham's Library and Museum and the County Record Office. There has, however, been a disappointingly small response from the general public; we are especially on the look-out for any views of the mineral tramway, the potteries and the various brickworks.

The Book Sub-committee has consolidated its work on the draft of *Leckhampton in the Second World War*, and I hope to have positive news for you in the New Year.

Finally, may I remind you that *Leckhampton Yesteryear* is again on sale in Leckhampton Post Office, price £2.50. It describes all the highlights of life in Leckhampton from the 1890s until 1939 and offers something to everyone with an interest in the past, whether or not they live in Leckhampton. Even if you already have a copy yourselves (and I hope every member has!), it would make an excellent and original present for a friend or relative, as well as helping to boost the Society's funds and enable us to undertake other publications in the future.

Eric Miller

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council

LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

BANDS AND BANDSTANDS

The new season opened with a most interesting talk by Mick Kippin on Cheltenham's Bandstands and the Spa Bands. The Spa Bands were active from about 1750 to 1875, coinciding with the rise of Cheltenham as a spa town. The Royal Old Wells (opened in 1740), Montpellier (1809) and Pittville (1830) all provided musical entertainment for their patrons. The early bands, which had only about half a dozen players, played in a gallery or box integral to the spa building. The first permanent outside bandstand was the Chinese Pagoda built in Montpellier Gardens in the early 1830's, which was demolished, probably in 1864 when the present bandstand was built. This, it is claimed, is the oldest bandstand in the British Isles in regular use. It was reopened in 1994 after restoration. The Pittville bandstand was built in 1900 and has also recently been restored.

Mick included some references to Leckhampton: an unknown band played at the opening of the tramway in 1810; and the Montpellier Spa Band played at a fundraising bazaar in 1865 in aid of the enlargement of the Parish Church, and also at a Cottagers Show in 1873. He also mentioned the bandstand in Naunton Park, which was built in memory of Captain St. Clair Ford of Linton House, who died in 1896. It was removed in 1925 after falling into disrepair. Mick would very much like to obtain a copy of a photograph of this bandstand, if any member knows of one. The last bandstand to be built in Cheltenham was in Imperial Gardens, built in 1920 and sold to Bognor Regis in 1948.

MEMBERS' EVENING

Another very successful Members' Evening was held on 16th October, with five short presentations on a wide variety of topics. Alan Gill started the evening with a display of some of the historic photographs in the archive he is assembling, together with a plea for more material to borrow and copy. Next came Roger Richards with an account of the Leckhampton Vestry records in the County Record Office. The scope of the Vestry's activities is described in an article which follows. As a preliminary he produced a map showing the Parish boundaries at various times and for various purposes, a matter which has caused a certain amount of confusion recently.

The third speaker was Sir Robert Hunt, who spoke about his early days in Leckhampton, including the association of his family with the Malvern Inn, which added a poignant note in view of its closure and imminent sale. He was followed by John Randall, who spoke about the notebook which belonged to Robert Cary Barnard and has been presented to the Society by his granddaughter. It contains some of the source material for his *The Records of Leckhampton*, published in 1897. Although much of the information is available in original documents in the Record Office, this is a very handy and valuable summary, with Barnard's own comments added. Finally Peter Smith reported on the research he and others have undertaken with old newspapers, particularly the *Cheltenham Examiner*.

THE LECKHAMPTON PARISH VESTRY

By the end of the 13th century practically the whole realm had been divided up into parishes, and the ecclesiastical units so formed are now termed 'ancient parishes'. Leckhampton is one of these, but its area originally included that of the Parish of St Philip and St James, which was created in 1869. Consequently Leckhampton St Peter has a Rector, but St P & J, as a daughter church, a Vicar. The boundaries of the ancient parish remained in force for civil purposes until the reorganisation of local government in 1894.

The Vestry was a parochial body which included the incumbent (in our case the Rector) or curate-in-charge, and the persons of both sexes who were rated for the relief of the poor in respect of the parish, whether resident therein or not, and the occupiers of properties so rated. The most important ecclesiastical function of the Vestry was the election of two Churchwardens, one of whom was by custom nominated by the Rector.

However, the Parish Vestry was traditionally responsible for all sorts of local issues, including highways, lighting, sanitation, education, regulation of wages and the Poor Law, in addition to the maintenance of the church fabric and churchyard. A study of the Vestry minute book for the years 1838-69 reveals how the Parish was governed before any separate civil authority existed at that level. The Parish officers comprised two churchwardens, two overseers of the poor and two surveyors of the highways. Vestry meetings were chaired by the Rector or, in his absence, by one of the churchwardens and were held in the vestry room or in the church. Notices of meetings, probably fixed to the church door, were signed by the churchwardens, overseers or surveyors, according to the nature of the business to be transacted. When business under more than one head was to be taken at the same meeting, a separate notice was signed by each officer concerned. These notices, which were copied into the minute book, served as the agenda. The minutes were signed by the chairman and the officers concerned. The minutes do not record how many people were present, though there must have been some in addition to the Parish officers, since the names of proposers and seconders of resolutions who did not sign the book are recorded.

Parish officers were elected for a year at a time, and there appears to have been no limit on the number of times a person might be re-elected. The procedure with regard to churchwardens has been described; in the case of the overseers four names were put before the magistrates, who selected the two to serve. The two surveyors were elected by the vestry. The meetings at which these elections were held were probably attended by a larger number of parishioners than those held at other times. In all, between 10 and 20 meetings were held in a year at irregular intervals as the need arose.

After elections, the next most important business to occupy the Vestry was the setting of rates; Church Rate, Poor Rate and Road Rate. Rates were set at so much in the pound of rateable value and were supposed to be sufficient for one year's expenditure, but could be 'adjusted' before the year was up. These rates were, of course, additional to the tithes or agricultural rents for glebe land payable direct to the Rector. Frequently, when the overseers or surveyors asked the vestry for more money, their books were examined and they were ordered to proceed against defaulters first. It appears that the authority of the vestry was needed before a ratepayer could be summonsed for non-payment.

In general, the actual sums involved are not recorded in the minute book, but in February 1842 there was something of a scandal when the collector, one Robert Miles, disappeared and a committee of ratepayers was appointed to look into the various accounts to ascertain what portion of the old rates had been paid. The poor rate accounted for the largest sum: there was a deficiency of £19.13s.2d out of a total of £180.1s.4d. The church rate deficiency was £4.1s.4d out of £34.17s.2d, and the road rate £2.9s.2½ out of £20.9s.2½. In April 1842 the minutes record that the following amounts were owing for repairs to highways:

Messrs Vobes and Parker for stone	39.16. 5
Mr Hicks for hauling	6.11.10½
Mr G Parker for hauling	2.11. 0
Balance to Messrs Heather and Hall	<u>27.10. 3</u>
	<u>£76. 9. 6½</u>

It should be noted that James Vobes and William Hicks were the churchwardens, so it seems to have been a very cosy little arrangement.

Whilst the overseers were responsible for identifying the poor and providing funds for relief, the administration of relief was in the hands of the guardians of the poor in the Cheltenham Union of Parishes, formed in accordance with the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834. This comprised the parishes of Badgeworth, Cheltenham, Charlton Kings, Great Whitcombe, Leckhampton, Prestbury, Shurdington, Swindon and Uckington. There was one workhouse for the Union in Cheltenham. In a return for the quarter ending 25 June 1836 Leckhampton is recorded as having 7 in-door (ie in the workhouse) paupers and 14 out-door. The total charge to the parish was £39.10s.5½d. The majority of out-door relief was granted because of old age, mainly to widows, there being no such thing as an old-age pension in those days.

In April 1873 the first step was taken to detach the civil from the ecclesiastical functions of the Parish with the establishment of the Leckhampton Local Board. Under the Borough Extension Order of 28 February 1893, the most populous part of Leckhampton Parish, comprising 294 acres in Southtown, the Park and the Leckhampton Road area north of Church Road, were transferred into

Cheltenham Borough. In August 1894 a new civil parish of Leckhampton was established in the area outside the Borough. The Leckhampton Local Board became defunct with the parish division. One important consequence of these reforms was that there was now a clear distinction between the civil and ecclesiastical parish.

The Parish Vestry continued with its church functions until the establishment of Parochial Church Councils in 1922, which were elected by persons on a new electoral roll. An annual meeting of parishioners, not necessarily on the electoral roll, continued to elect the churchwardens. In Leckhampton this is still called the Vestry Meeting, though this is not strictly correct. In this guise the ancient assembly of the Parish Vestry lingers on.

Roger Richards

LISTED GRAVES IN LECKHAMPTON CHURCHYARD

A handful of members of the Society assembled in Leckhampton churchyard on the afternoon of 24th September to see Julian Rawas demonstrate his painstaking technique of recording the tombstone inscriptions on behalf of the Family History Society. We were able to try our own hand too, which confirmed the impression that it was a far from straightforward task. We have sent him a small token of thanks for his time and effort on our behalf, which includes giving us a copy of his computerised listing of the 800 inscriptions so far recorded.

When talking with Julian about his survey, I recalled that a number of the gravestones are listed by the Department of the Environment as Grade II structures, defined as being "of special interest, warranting every effort being made to preserve them". What follows is based on the official listing, the survey and a plan of the churchyard completed in 1914 by L W Barnard, which is invaluable in providing names and dates, some of which have by now become obliterated.

St Peter's church itself is listed as Grade II starred - ie "a particularly important building of more than special interest". Otherwise, the objects that deserve most to be listed are the badly eroded medieval monuments on either side of the porch. On four of the slabs to the west there are traces of incised crosses on the upper surface, while four effigies on the east side are dressed in long robes. The three closest to the porch are probably the tombs of women; that furthest from the porch has shorter robes and no headdress suggesting the figure may be that of a man. One appears to be holding a heart and all four effigies rest their feet on dogs. If, as seems likely, the effigies on the tombstones by the porch date from the 14th century, they may well represent members of the family of Sir John Giffard, who died in 1330 and who is held to be responsible for first major enlargement of the church.

The document goes on to say that the slabs were found during the digging of the foundations for the new nave and north aisle in the 19th century. In *Leckhampton Yesteryear* (pages 16-17) I quote from a report on the church by Professor Henry Middleton, which had originally been printed in a Parish Magazine in 1899. He was the son of John Middleton, the architect responsible for enlarging the church in 1866 - 68. He referred to there being at the west end of the churchyard two "very dilapidated recumbent effigies and a number of stone coffin lids, 5 [of them] with floriated 14th century crosses", while a recumbent effigy of a priest was "suffering from the effects of the weather and it would be well if it could be replaced in the Church under shelter". This effigy now rests near the font, but it was not until 1907 that, according to the then Rector, "thirteen ancient and interesting tombstones which were lying in different parts of the churchyard, covered with moss ... [were] placed together on either side of the entrance porch and the four recumbent figures among them railed in".

Henry Middleton also reminds us that the effigies of Sir John and Lady Giffard, now moved to the back of the church, used to lie near the altar of the Lady Chapel in the south aisle.

Of the other monuments in the list there are altogether eleven seventeenth and eighteenth-century tombstones and one from the nineteenth century. One group of five monuments stands about 15 metres west of the porch, to the right of the path leading to the church. The first is a chest-tomb to Ralph Pumfret and others of his family. He died in 1699 aged 90. (His descendants' surname is now rendered as "Pumfrey", and one of them is a member of our Society.) Two of the other monuments are to members of the Arkell and Bellinger families: a crested headstone for Samuel Arkell, who died in 1717, aged 25, and a classical chest-tomb to John and Hester Bellinger of "Cubberley" and some of their children. With great perseverance Juilian Rawes has deciphered the inscription on another stone, which commemorates Miles Bridges, who died in 1675, aged 25, and Ann, who was later the wife of Edmund Carpenter. The initials "R.C." on an adjacent marker stone may, he suggests, be a memorial to the Clapton or Crump family. If the initials do relate to the Crump family, it is distinct from another grave (not listed) to be found near the vestry, which commemorates one Ralph Crump who died in 1670. A Ralph Crump had been a churchwarden earlier in the century and the name also appears in the inscription on one of the bells cast in 1688.

Another group of monuments is to be found up to 7 metres north of the north aisle. They relate to the Caffolds (Richard, Yeoman of this Parish, who died in 1726 aged 80), the Heflehams (starting with William who died in 1692), the Lawrences of Up Hatherley (John, died 1788, and his wife Mary), and the Roses (John, died 1762, Ann and William).

The most recent memorial to be included in the list is a tall "Gothick-style" monument to Catherine Best, widow of John Rycroft Best and youngest daughter of Richard Count de Vins who died in

1855, and other members of that family. One of these, a captain in the Indian Army, fell at the battle of Ferozashah on December 1845. The monument incorporates a bronze plaque depicting a "life-sized" figure of an angel.

Setting aside the question of what size an angel should be (!), this is without doubt one of the most striking Victorian monuments in the churchyard. Whether or not others also deserve to be listed, it is reassuring to know that the authorities have recorded the existence of some of the monuments and can thereby impose restrictions on what can be done to them. The elements are oblivious to such threats, however, and many of the inscriptions are becoming illegible as the Cotswold stone wears away. This makes it all the more imperative to record the inscriptions before they disappear completely, and we must be grateful to Julian Rawes and his helpers for their dedication to their task.

Eric Miller

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION - "LECKHAMPTON TODAY"

The competition, which was announced in *Smoke Signal No 17* (December 1996), is designed to attract contemporary photographs of the Leckhampton area. Entries are now invited and should be handed to the Chairman or another member of the Committee by Saturday 13th December.

The competition is open to all Society members, who may submit up to three of their own photographs, which may be in colour or black and white and of any size and should have been taken during the past twelve months.

On the back of each photograph should be written a title and a pseudonym. The photographs should then be placed in an envelope together with a second smaller envelope (or sealed folded piece of paper) giving both the pseudonym and the photographer's true name.

A small prize will be given for the photograph that most vividly illustrates an aspect of life in Leckhampton in 1997. Artistic merit will be taken into account as well as topicality.

The Chairman and two other members of the Society will act as judges, and their decision will be final.

The entries will be displayed at the Society's meeting on 16th January, after which they will be returned to their owners.

THE KOREAN WAR

One of our members, Cdr John Lansdown, has published a book entitled *With the carriers in Korea*, about the Fleet Air Arm's role during that war. It is available to members, price £18-50, from the author, tel 524600. John will tell us how he set about writing the book at the Members' Evening next March.

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 1958 - 1960, 1962, 1964, 1966, please let me know.

Eric Miller

FROM THE EDITOR

We welcome the following new members:

Mr and Mrs Philip Newcombe,
Mrs Barbara Wills,
Mr James Gorvett.

Copy for the February '98 issue should be handed in at the meeting on 15th January or sent to me at 28 Church Road by 25th January.

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.

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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Issued free to members - otherwise 25 pence



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28 Church Rd, Leckhampton
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THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the first issue of *Smoke Signal* for 1998! To judge by the attendance figures at recent meetings, our programme offers members exactly what they want, and I hope that will be equally true of future subjects for talks. There are already several topics lined up for our Members' Evening, which always proves stimulating, to be held in April (We are always glad to receive suggestions for speakers and topics). A couple of outings have also been arranged for later in the year.

The portfolio of historic photographs is progressing well, and Alan Gill has already copied over 150 photos into it. Most of these are from private sources, so please note Alan's request (on page 5) for specific subjects. The project has been helped by a grant from Cheltenham Arts Council, whose new quarterly journal *Perspectives* is available free for members to pick up at meetings.

We hope to be able to publish a selection of the photographs in due course. Before that, however, we have to deal with *Leckhampton in the Second World War*. Your book sub-committee hopes to be able to obtain quotations from printers within the next few weeks, with a view to publishing it by early summer. We shall open a subscription list to help defray printing costs.

Did you see David Cox on the TV programme *Collector's Lot*? We (and evidently Bill Oddie too) could have watched a lot more as he spoke about early Christmas cards. David has entertained us more than once before by showing us some of his collection.

Eric Miller

THE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY

The speaker at our November meeting was Dr John Jurica of the County Record Office, who has been concerned with the production/editing of the Victoria History of Gloucestershire, part of a national project to produce histories of all the English counties, founded in 1899 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Eighteen volumes are projected for Gloucestershire of which eight have so far been published. The first to be published was Vol II in 1907, which dealt with church, social and economic history; the remaining published volumes deal with geographical areas and appeared between 1965 and 1996. Leckhampton will be included in the volume on Cheltenham, but publication is some way off. They are currently working on the Northleach area.

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council

LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

THE HISTORY OF CLEEVE HILL

This was the subject of the talk at our January meeting by David Aldred of the Gotherington Local History Society and a well-known author and lecturer. The common land on the hill was divided between Bishop's Cleeve and Southam manors/parishes and it is not surprising that the earliest dwelling was built in 1796 on the boundary in Rising Sun Lane with a view to avoiding manorial dues. The speaker concentrated on the latter part of the 19th century and the period up to the First World War. Until the 1860's the Cheltenham races were held on the top of the hill. There was little development until after an Act of 1890 regulating use of the common. The Cotswold Convalescent House was built in 1893 and the area became very popular for day trips following the building of a tram line in 1901. The talk was illustrated with slides of places of refreshment and other buildings, many of which survive albeit with other uses. Members may also recall David Aldred's talk to the Society in 1995 on "Lost medieval villages".

LECKHAMPTON COURT FOXHOUNDS

In 1901 Captain (later Colonel) Henry Cecil Elwes of Colesbourne Park married Edith Muriel Hargreaves who had inherited Leckhampton Court on the death of her father. They then lived at the Court and in 1904 Cecil Elwes formed his own pack of foxhounds to hunt the Painswick country. The foxhounds were loaned by the Berkeley Hunt whose master was the 3rd Baron Fitzhardinge, and the Cotswold Hunt (founded in 1858 to hunt an area given over by Lord Fitzhardinge), and were kennelled at the Court, until 1913 when the family were about to move to Riseholme in Lincolnshire to take on the Burton Foxhounds early in 1914. Many will be familiar with the memorial stones in a field behind the Court erected by Cecil Elwes for his favourite hunter 'The Continental' who died in 1902. During the period that the foxhounds were with Captain Elwes he engaged Tom Pitman as whipper-in and stables huntsman; his daughter Ursula, now Mrs Tandy, lives in Old Bath Road and has some recollections and photographs of huntsmen and hounds. Tom Pitman had been 2nd whipper-in with Llangibby Hunt in Monmouthshire, and an enthusiastic follower of hunting since a young man, sometimes skipping school to go hunting with his father. Mrs Tandy remembers how her family would take on young hounds and that she herself was sometimes enlisted for 'puppy-walking'. Tom Pitman transferred to the Woodland Pytchley Hunt in Northants and, in recognition of his time serving Leckhampton Court Master of Hounds, was presented with an inscribed hunting horn from Colonel Elwes.

Amy Woolacott

THE NIGHT PILLEY BRIDGE WAS BOMBED

While in Cheltenham General Hospital recently, I enjoyed long conversations with a fellow patient, Mr Seaward Mees, who had obviously led a most interesting life, mainly in aviation. After wartime service in the R.A.F., he became an auto-pilot tester for Smiths. However, he had started working life by following his father into the Great Western Railway and in 1940 was a call boy at the Malvern Road Depot. One of his duties was to cycle round the town to knock up engine drivers and firemen in time for their duty turns.

On 11th December 1940 word came through that Pilley Bridge had been hit and the Kingham line blocked with the last train on the far side from Cheltenham. The crew decided to carry on as far as they could and draw up near the pile of rubble, all that was left of the bridge. A reason for the decision may have been that fireman George Webb lived in Old Bath Road.

Back at Malvern Road, young Mees was despatched to the homes of the driver Frederick Roberts, known as 'Frowsy Fred', in St George's Place, and of the Webbs. He told Mrs Roberts that her husband was safe but would be home late, and pedalled up to where the bridge had been. Confronting him was his own doctor in Home Guard uniform and guarding the wreckage. No, he could not clamber across the track: that was against orders.

So the messenger had to cycle down Mead Road and go round by Leckhampton Road, only to find that George Webb had scrambled up the bank and gone home. Mrs Webb already knew what had happened and George was back on the train. What the young boy noticed particularly was that there was no one about; he had the streets to himself. The train steamed off back to Kingham, returning to Cheltenham via Honeybourne. There was only a handful of passengers apparently and no one seems to have asked them how they reached home. However, the *Echo* of 12th December did have a photo of railwaymen clearing away the debris. I have been told that a long legal battle over the positioning etc of the present bridge had to be settled before construction could begin. Road traffic had to go a long way round all that time. It is hard to imagine Pilley Bridge's current stream of vehicles stranded either side of the gap!

This chance hospital encounter rescued from oblivion just in time a vivid eye-witness account of Leckhampton's best-known bomb damage. Both Mr and Mrs Mees died on 19th January this year, a few days after I had phoned them to check details. Their daughter has agreed with this account.

Derek Brown

(This graphic account has reached us just in time to be included in Leckhampton in the Second World War - Editor.)

A PICTORIAL TEASER

The illustration is a copy of an artist's sketch from around 1830 which recently came to the attention of the local Art Gallery and Museum. The artist is Alexander Munro (1802-44) and the drawing is annotated "Men working near the Old Bath Road, Cheltenham". The question is: where exactly is the scene it depicts?

There are several points which could help with identifying the location. It shows a track or lane curving leftwards apparently sloping upwards. Two rustic cottages are shown, one on each side of the lane, with ground to the left rising up steeply. A small family group is on the bank watching a group of workmen with pick, shovel and wheelbarrow digging into the bank. Less obvious, but potentially relevant, is what appears to be water running beside the lane on the right under the trees; just possibly this could be a roadside ditch in flood, but the only permanent watercourse known in this area is the Pilley Brook.



We can only guess what the workmen are actually engaged on. Both the Pilley and Naunton areas are known to have been associated at this time with brick making and industrial pottery works requiring clay to be excavated locally. Also, at several points higher up the Old Bath Road above Daisy Bank, Croome's 1835 map depicts old quarries and gravel pits which could equally well perhaps fit with the activity depicted.

There is no reason why the Old Bath Road could not have looked exactly like this in the early 1800's, but the fact that the sketch is annotated "near" the road needs to be borne in mind. It is a fact also that available maps of the time show no dwellings along the Old Bath Road from Sandford up to Pilley.

But, for the sake of argument, let's assume that the scene is of the Old Bath Road itself, in which case, one of the following locations might fit;

a. Old Bath Road, where it curves left above the junction with Leckhampton Road: as it happens, Croome actually shows two dwellings here on each side of the road in similar juxtaposition to those in the drawing, but the road in the drawing does not appear to be as steep; moreover no permanent watercourse is known to have existed beside the road at this point.

b. Old Bath Road below the junction with Pilford Road: at this point the Pilley Brook having crossed the road would have run down the west side of the road for a short distance before veering away towards Delancey and the Naunton area (it is now of course culverted underground and invisible); this also would have been close to Pilley brickworks. It is difficult, however, to see how the ground on the east side could ever have banked so steeply.

c. Old Bath Road at Pilley: today's leftwards curve in the road just after crossing the bridge would fit, but since the drawing was probably done before the railway cutting was made (in the mid-19th century), assumptions about how things looked are risky. Almost certainly the land at this point would have been level on both sides of the road. Also, the course of the Pilley Brook passed much further away to the west.

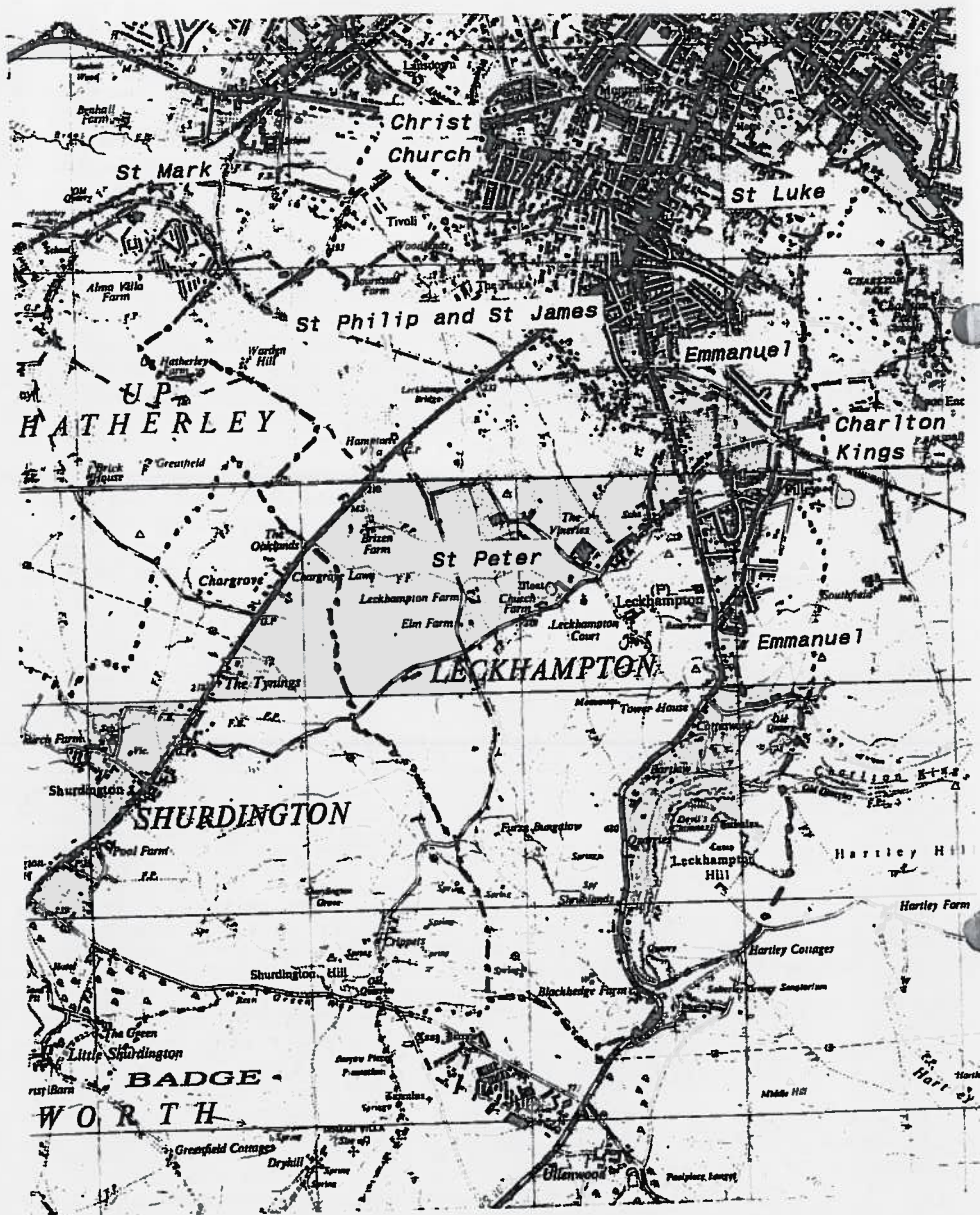
If, as it appears, the case for the Old Bath Road is far from sound, where else should we look?

None of the side roads off the Old Bath Road above Pilford Road (like Undercliff, Daisy Bank etc) seem to match, nor does Charlton Lane (which as part of Collum Strete is a very old route). Available maps of the time suggest that the area to the east of Old Bath Road was open land possessing little by way of dwellings. On the other side though was the old tithing (or hamlet) of Naunton where some cottages possibly of the sort shown in the drawing must have survived into the 19th century. There must have been some tracks out of Naunton towards the Old Bath Road and it seems possible that one might have led out from Maida Vale following the alignment of Mead Road. The Pilley Brook will have passed through Maida Vale heading for the Exmouth Arms area and thence towards the Park. Potteries are known to have existed in this area too and the ground rises noticeably, especially on the west side of what today is Fairfield Walk. It is hard though, to see this location as being "near" to Old Bath Road.

It will be obvious to you that I don't yet have an answer and if (like me!) you are totally confused, my apologies. Seriously though some of us are keen to identify the scene for the record, so if you think you have spotted something I have missed, please let me know.

Terry Moore-Scott

LECKHAMPTON PARISH



HISTORIC PARISH BOUNDARY

PRESENT CHURCH BOUNDARIES

PARISH BOUNDARIES

As a follow-up to my little presentation at the Members' Evening last October I thought I would redo the map of the area, this time in portrait format, as that is the shape of the historic parish. I have also shown the present Church of England parishes within and around the historic Leckhampton Parish. It should be noted that the Parish of St Philip and St James now extends beyond the border of Leckhampton into the Montpellier area. This development dates from 1965 when the parish was united with that of St James (the Leckhampton one had always had St James in its title). In 1972 St James's church in Suffolk Square was deconsecrated and adapted for use as a parish centre.

I have not shown any civil boundaries that differ from ecclesiastical ones. The present Cheltenham Borough boundary can be ascertained from current street plans. As it goes along Daisy Bank Road, we are again in the position of Leckhampton being divided between different local authorities; this time we have lost the southern end instead of the northern. The Society will continue to base its researches on Historic Leckhampton.

Roger Richards

OLD PHOTOGRAPHS

Although we have got off to a good start with the copying of old photographs of Leckhampton, largely due to the kindness of June Stait in allowing us access to Bruce's extensive collection, there are still a lot of subjects we would like pictures of. We have such a rich and varied history in Leckhampton and it would be nice to record as much of it as possible. So, if you have any pictures of any of the subjects listed here, or know of the whereabouts of any, even a single picture, do let me or any Committee Member know about it. Great care will be taken of anything lent for copying.

Old shops, garages, Post Office
The old Wheatsheaf Inn
The old Pilley Bridge
Leckhampton Inn
Delancey Hospital
Leckhampton Dairies and horse-drawn floats
The Vineries nursery
Pilford Brickworks
Pottery and Tileworks (Charlton Lane)
Old farmhouses and cottages
The Moat
Cheltenham Caravan Works (Leckhampton Rd)
Siddall Caravan Works (Old Bath Rd)
The Drinking Fountain (Church Rd/Leckhampton Rd corner)
The old Reading Room/Library (Moorend Rd)
Leckhampton Hall (old house on Shurdington Rd)
Ladies' College Sanatorium (Leckhampton Rd)
Groups of local people
Prominent local people
Any events/happenings

Alan Gill (Tel: 519248)

OBITUARY

We regret to report the death last December of Geoffrey Beddow and offer our sympathy to his widow Valerie, who is a member of our Committee. Likewise we offer sympathy to Alan Kitson on the death of his wife Janet, who passed away in the Sue Ryder Home in January. Janet contributed towards the chapter on schools in 1894 - *the end of an era* and did similar work in connection with Leckhampton during the Second World War.

FROM THE EDITOR

We welcome the following new members:

Michael and Carolyn Greet,	Miss Ann Gibson,
Gerald and Anette Frawley,	Mrs Sheila Parry.

Dates for your Diary

Thursday 18 June: Visit to Highnam church, conducted by Tom Fenton. Meet at Highnam Village Hall car park by 8 p.m.

Wednesday 1 July: Joint outing with Charlton Kings LHS to Upton-on-Severn and Madresfield Court. A list will be drawn up for those wishing to take part.

Copy for the May '98 issue should be sent to me at 28 Church Road by 15th April or handed in at the meeting on 16th April.

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.

As always guests 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

Data Protection Act

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Issued free to members - otherwise 25 pence



smoke signal

NUMBER 23, MAY 1998

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

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

As well as our successful programme of talks, much work has been going on behind the scenes during the past few months. Most importantly, the book *Leckhampton in the Second World War*, to which so many people have contributed reminiscences and photographs and on which Amy Woolacott, John Randall and I have spent much editorial effort, should see the light of day by the end of May. We have arranged for Top Flight of St George's Place to print it, and it will be on sale at the attractive price of £4.50. A notice is enclosed, with an order form with which members can ensure that they receive a copy (or copies!) hot from the press.

Two outings have been arranged. The first is an evening one, on Thursday 18 June, to see Highnam Church, whose highly ornate painted interior was cleaned not long ago. The tour will be led by Tom Fenton (*the* authority on the history of the building and its decoration) and should be well worth the journey. Afterwards members may care to stop at the Dog at Over for refreshments and a chat. Details of the arrangements for getting there are given below. It is the turn of Charlton Kings Local History Society to organise the joint summer outing this year. On Wednesday 1 July, we shall visit Upton-on-Severn in the morning and then go on to Madresfield Court, near Malvern. The latter, which is not regularly accessible to the public and will be opened specially for us, is of great interest. It is an Elizabethan house with 19th-century alterations, and its chapel, according to Pevsner, is "an exceptionally complete piece of Arts and Crafts decoration". Please let me have the enclosed booking slip if you wish to join us.

Finally, don't forget the Annual General Meeting on 14 May (admission free!), for which a notice is enclosed. After the business is over, Terry Moore-Scott will tell us about his research into "Leckhampton's second manor". The AGM is an opportunity for members to hear of - and influence - the Society's plans for the future. We still badly need another volunteer to act as stand-in to Tom Hewlett as Hon Treasurer, and eventually to replace him in that capacity. Tom has held the post ever since the Society was formed, and we cannot presume on his good will indefinitely. I should be very glad to hear from any member (or spouse of a member) who has some relevant experience or skill and could spare a couple of hours a week for this important but not excessively difficult task.

Eric Miller

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council

LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

THE HISTORY OF ARLE COURT

Phyllis White, a genealogist and researcher, who has written a book on Arle Court, was the speaker at our February meeting. The talk covered the Elizabethan manor house in Arle village, which was demolished in 1880. It was originally the home of the Lygon family, but passed to the Butt family in 1795. In 1834 Thomas Packer Butt bought Grovefield, a property that had been built two years before next to the then new Gloucester Road. He allowed Arle Court gradually to deteriorate and in 1857 renamed Grovefield Arle Court. This is the mansion which stands by the Golden Valley round-about. Some traces of the old Arle Court can be seen in houses built on the site and remains of the estate continued at Arle Farm, but that too was demolished in 1986.

Butt died in 1900 and in 1904 the new Arle Court was bought and extended by Herbert Unwin, a wealthy businessman who came from Yorkshire. Unwin died in 1925 and in 1935 the house became the headquarters of Dowty's. The house is now empty and its future uncertain; one possibility is that it will be sold to a film company. Certainly the lavish interior, which we were able to admire from Mrs White's photographs, would make an ideal setting for costume drama.

LOCAL PATHS, ROADS AND TRACKS

The March meeting was very well attended. The speaker was Alan Pilbeam of Shurdington, who is a geography teacher at King's School Gloucester. His subject was local paths, roads and tracks in the County.

Many of these originated in Roman times and many more still survive from medieval times. He showed a series of old maps, on which these routes were clearly marked, usually linking settlements and farms. It is amazing how many are still in use and are clearly defined on present maps. Usage by walkers has helped to preserve the tracks and bridle paths. Some dating can be calculated from the adjoining hedgerows. Much of the use was by drovers many years ago, who made detours to avoid tolls and taxes. Many of these drovers' paths are clearly defined on present maps.

The talk was illustrated by excellent slides: a most interesting evening.

Daphne Wheeler

MEMBERS' EVENING

Another very successful Members' Evening was held on 16th April. After making some announcements, most of which are repeated as notices in this issue, the Chairman introduced the first of the two speakers for the evening, Lieutenant Commander John Lansdown,

whose book *With the Carriers in Korea* has just been published in a second revised edition. He himself served in HMS Glory, a light fleet carrier, in 1952-53 and, on his retirement from teaching in 1986, was moved to write the story of the sea and air war off Korea because he felt it had not received the attention it deserved. He described the immense amount of work involved in assembling all the source material and the difficulties he experienced in finding a publisher. All 720 copies of the first edition sold and, as a result of good reviews and publicity, a new publisher undertook to produce a more lavish edition with more photographs, of which 800 have been sold. Copies of the book are available from the author (tel 524600), price £20. The price of £18-50 quoted in *Smoke Signal* No 21 was for the first edition which is sold out.

The second speaker was David Lyall whose subject was the railway which, until 1962, passed through Leckhampton. The route it took between Lansdown Junction and Charlton Kings can be seen on the map which was used to illustrate the parish boundaries in the last issue. It was opened in 1881 as the Banbury and Cheltenham Direct Railway, with connections to London at Kingham. In 1891 a branch from Andoversford to Cirencester, Marlborough and Andover, with running rights over existing track, enabled the Midland and South West Junction Railway to run through trains from as far away as Newcastle and Liverpool to Southampton. A loop enabling trains from Gloucester to switch to the Andoversford line without reversing at Lansdown was built to accommodate this service. As a result Leckhampton became the only station in the area where the Midland and SW trains stopped, and so was renamed Cheltenham South, Leckhampton. A timetable from 1934 was reproduced in *Smoke Signal* no 3 of June 1993. The line through Leckhampton was made double track in 1900. We should very much like to see a photograph or drawing of the station while it was single track. David illustrated his talk with slides of some really nostalgic photographs he took before the line closed, with shots of the now-vanished bridges that carried Shurdington Road and Moorend Crescent over the railway.

OLD PHOTOGRAPHS

A selection of the 300 old photographs of Leckhampton that Alan Gill has copied were on display at the Members' Meeting. The list of subjects he would still like to copy, published in the last issue, is still valid, but in particular he would like pictures of Pilford brickworks and the Wheatsheaf Inn. As already promised, great care will be taken of anything lent for copying. Alan's telephone number is 519248.

VISIT TO HIGHNAM CHURCH

On Thursday 18 June, a tour of Highnam Church has been arranged. Please arrive at the Highnam Village Hall car park (near the church) by 7.55. There will be nominal charge of about £1. Please let Tom Hewlett (tel: 238617) know if you wish to go, so that we shall have some idea of the numbers. Tom can organise transport for anyone in need of a lift.

SUMMER OUTING

For this year's Summer Outing, on Wednesday 1st July, we join Charlton Kings Local History Society who are organising a visit to Upton-on-Severn (morning and lunch - it may be possible to arrange a guided tour) and on to Madresfield Court, near Malvern. We shall spend part of the afternoon there, and there will be a stop for tea on the return journey.

The coach will leave Charlton Kings at 10.00 am, returning about 5.30 pm. It will pick up from Leckhampton at the junction of Charlton Lane and Leckhampton Road at about 10.10 am. The cost of the coach and entry to Madresfield Court will be £11, payable in advance. You can either book your place when attending the AGM or you can use the booking form enclosed with this newsletter, sending it to Eric Miller together with a cheque payable to the Charlton Kings Local History Society, by 30th May.

Eric Miller

COUNTY LOCAL HISTORY MEETING

The Painswick Local History Society is hosting this year's Gloucestershire Local History Committee regional meeting on Saturday 27th June. The programme will start at 2pm and end at 4pm in the Church Rooms. The charge for the visit, including tea, will be £3. Further details, including a booking slip, will be available at the AGM. The contact in Painswick is Hywel James on 01452 812419.

FROM THE EDITOR

We welcome the following new members:

Ronald and Madeline Hill
Jill Waller.

Copy for the August '98 issue should be sent to me at 28 Church Road by 15th July, or before you go on holiday.

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.

As always guests 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 24, AUGUST 1998

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

LECKHAMPTON in the SECOND WORLD WAR

At last the book has been published, and all those members who placed orders in advance will have received their copies. The Editorial Committee hopes that members will be delighted with both its appearance and content. Remember that the Society relies on direct sales to defray the not inconsiderable cost of production, and the book will be available to members at the concessionary price of £4.50 up to and including the meeting on 17 September; thereafter they will have to pay the 'shop' price - but still good value of £4.95. It is on sale at the Leckhampton Post Office, Leats in the Bath Road and the Museum bookshop and it is hoped that Waterstones will do a promotion. Look out too for a special feature in the *Echo* in due course.

Our Chairman will be giving a couple of talks about the book at meetings of other organisations, to which LLHS members are invited:

- to the Leckhampton Men's Society Thursday 8 October, at 7.45 pm in the Church Cottages, and
- to the Charlton Kings Local History Society on Tuesday 27 October at 8 pm in the Stanton Room, next to Charlton Kings Library.

AGM, 14th MAY 1998

Chairman's Report

The Chairman, Eric Miller, reported on a most successful year for the Society, which had achieved a busy and varied programme of activities, both in public and behind the scenes. Membership had risen to over 130, which was pleasing though it had led to accommodation problems.

The most significant achievement this year would be the publication of the book on *Leckhampton in the Second World War*. Around seventy inhabitants of the village, past and present, members and non-members, had had a hand in it. Amy Woolcott, John Randall and the Chairman had also spent much time in editing, and revising a series of draft versions, including nearly 50 photographs. The cost would virtually exhaust our reserves, and Society members' advance orders and cheques would help a lot. It was hoped to sell at least a hundred books in that way. In addition, it was anticipated that the Cheltenham Arts Council would award a grant of £100 towards the publication. Our

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LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

affiliation to this organisation had proved to be beneficial, and the Chairman had been elected to represent the interests of local history societies on the Council's Executive Committee.

Also progressing very satisfactorily was the Portfolio of historic photographs, paintings and prints of the area. Alan Gill had got together over 300 views, from a variety of sources. There were still gaps, and more contributions would still be welcome. We would in due course consider how best to publish a selection of the photos. The competition to select the best contemporary photograph of Leckhampton had attracted only one entry, and the experiment would not be repeated.

In addition to the regular publication *Smoke Signal*, edited by Roger Richards, there was scope for an occasional more substantial bulletin devoted solely to research papers, and it was hoped to prepare the first of these in the near future. Joan Launchbury was thanked for drawing up the programme of talks and arranging the speakers. Members' Evenings also proved deservedly popular. Daphne Wheeler was thanked for giving the Society regular publicity in *Village Voice*.

Finally, the Chairman thanked the Committee for their help and support, in particular Tom Hewlett, who had been Hon Treasurer since the Society's foundation and who had requested that someone with appropriate experience or facility with figures might offer him some assistance. The need for some "new blood" on the Committee was stressed. Marilyn West had agreed to be nominated, to serve in a general capacity. The Chairman also thanked David Cox, who was standing down from the Committee, for his past help.

In 1999 Eric Miller would have been Chairman for three years and intended then to retire from that office, while Roger Richards had agreed to stand for election to replace him; Roger was therefore proposed as Deputy Chairman for the current year. In 1999 Eric would take over the editorship of *Smoke Signal*.

Treasurer's Report

Tom Hewlett reported a healthy balance sheet, with an excess of income over expenditure of £237-48. The full accounts are held by the Treasurer and a copy may be inspected by members at the September meeting.

It was recommended that subscriptions and donations at meetings remain at their present rates, but renewal notices would be sent with the July/August *Smoke Signal* (please see enclosure and accompanying notice).

Election of Officers and Committee Members

The following Officers and Committee members were elected:
Chairman - Eric Miller, *Vice-Chairman* - Roger Richards,
Hon Secretary - Amy Woolacott, *Hon Treasurer* - Tom Hewlett,
Committee members - Valerie Beddow, Alan Gill, John Randall, Marilyn West.

Annual Subscription

Though it had been recommended that subscriptions should remain unchanged, John Randall proposed that, from September 1999, members' donations at meetings be abandoned and substituted by an increase in subscriptions. Visitors would still be expected to make a donation. Concessions might be made for members living too

far away to come to meetings. All the members attending accepted the proposal in principle. The Chairman said that the final form of the motion would be debated by the Committee, and raised again at the October Members' Evening. A ballot form will be included with the next *Smoke Signal*.

After the business had been concluded, Terry Moore-Scott gave a talk summarising his extensive research into the history of Leckhampton's Second Manor.

RENEWAL OF 1998 - 99 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Membership renewals are due on 1 September. Please use the form and envelope enclosed with this newsletter and as soon as possible post or deliver your cheque to the Hon Treasurer. By arranging for the renewals to be paid this way, we hope to relieve crowding and delay at the entrance to Church House at the start of the September meeting.

ACCOMMODATION AND VENUE FOR MEETINGS

The problem of accommodation has caused the Committee considerable anxiety, as the Society had several times come near to overflowing the room in Church House. Exhaustive investigations by the Committee have confirmed that there is a great scarcity of meeting places in the area. Some are no bigger than our usual room. Those that might be suitable are already fully booked, on whatever evening of the week. The only venue which would offer more generous space and might be available is the Primary School in Hall Road, but that is perhaps too large and might be cold in winter, while security and access to the toilets would present problems. The Committee has therefore decided, for the next year at least, that we should stay at Church House. In reaching this decision, it has been influenced by a "straw poll" of members, which showed that a significant majority were content with things as they are at present. Our concern, however, is not only for general comfort but also for our legal obligations under Health & Safety regulations, and the matter is being kept under review.

It is by pure coincidence that the November meeting of the Society (Colin Chapman on 'Genealogy') will be held in the Saint James's Parish Centre in Suffolk Square and not at Church House, and also that it will be on Wednesday 18 November and not on the Thursday. These changes were forced on us because of a double booking. Please note the details in your diaries.

CHELTENHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY JOURNAL

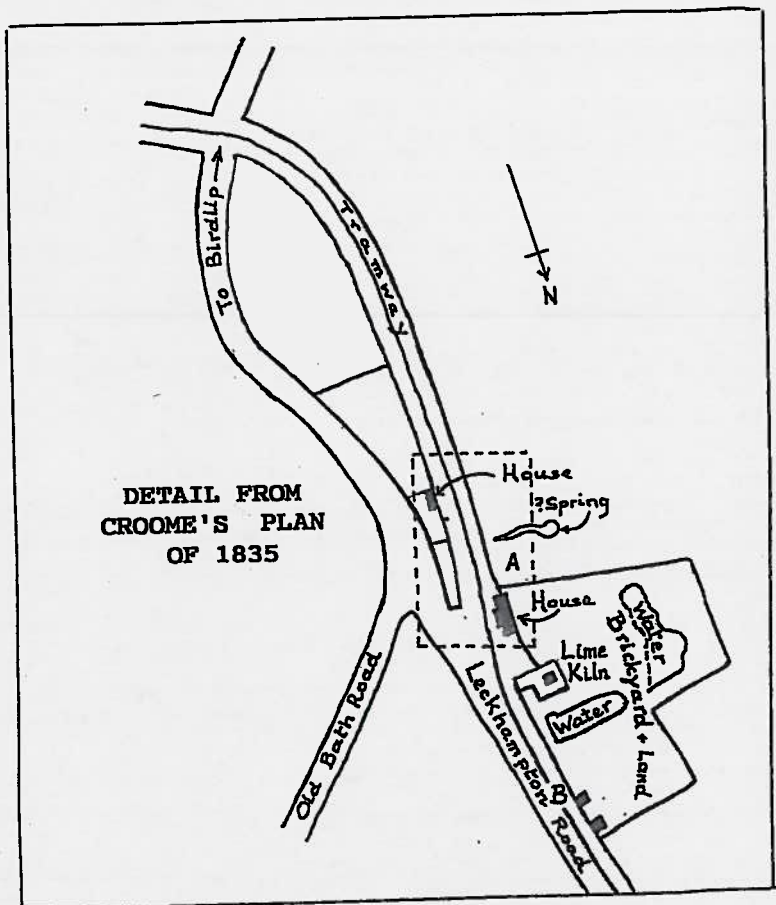
Journal No 14 of our sister society in Cheltenham contains a special illustrated section in memory of the late Barbara King. One of the contributions is by Eric Miller, who provided a print from the *Illustrated London News* of 6 October 1849. It shows Queen Victoria's train leaving Cheltenham station, and he has written an accompanying article describing the occasion. A copy of the Journal can be found in Cheltenham Reference Library (the rest, we understand, having been sold out). Members may also be interested in an article on The Hermitage, Bath Road, occupied by J B G Ferryman in the first half of the 19th century, and in one written by Terry Moore-Scott on the former Eight Bells Inn in Cheltenham High Street.

MORE ON THE "PICTORIAL TEASER"

Being a sequel to the article by Terry Moore-Scott which appeared in *Smoke Signal* No. 22, February 1998.

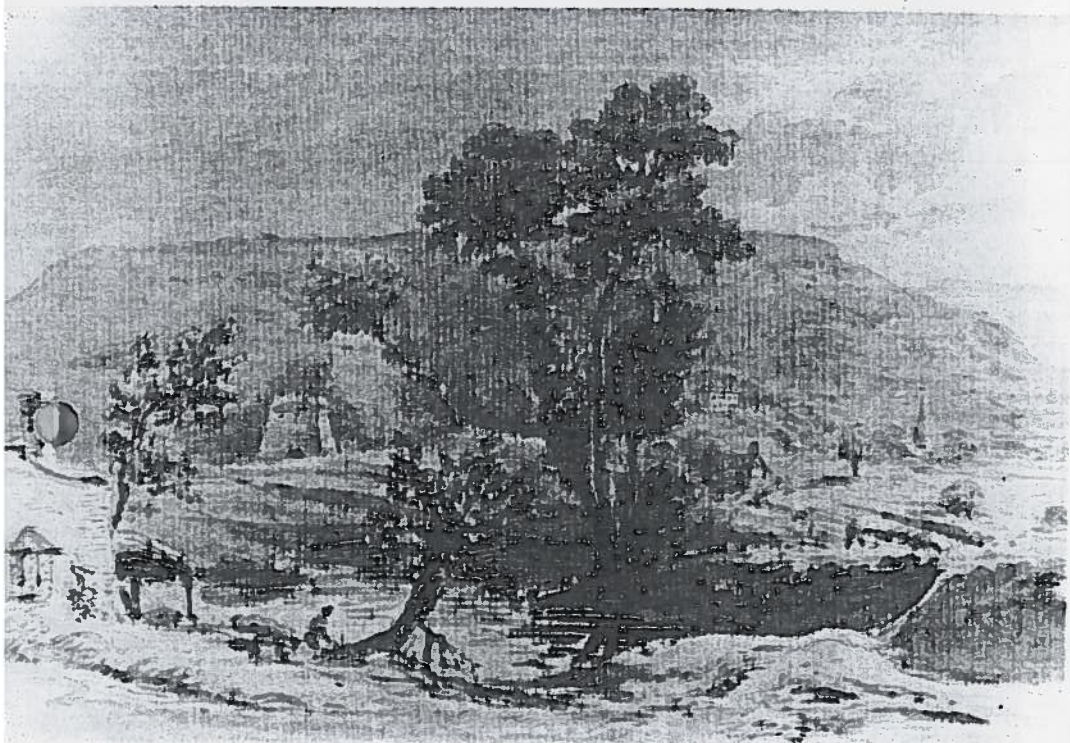
Thank you to all those members who, undeterred by the poor quality of the illustration [1], came back with their ideas on the location of the scene depicted in the artist's drawing. I discuss this more fully below. I can also report that yet another drawing by Alexander Monro has come to light which adds a valuable piece to the puzzle [2]!

Interestingly, virtually all the feedback from members on my first article was to suggest yet another location not covered in my note, namely that the scene was of the lower end of the Bottom Incline tramway track on the west side of Leckhampton Road, roughly near to where today the Scout hut stands. Looking at the drawing again, it is not difficult to see how one might conclude this: the general setting seems to fit and we know from Croome that houses existed alongside the tramway at least as far back as 1835 (see sketch plan, specifically box A) [3].



Also, while there is no record of a watercourse running down beside the track as shown in the drawing, Croome does show some kind of water feature (possibly a spring head) situated on the west side of the tramway near to where the reservoir is today. So far so good, but unfortunately (as the illustration also shows) the juxtaposition of the two houses on Croome's plan is not as Monro shows in his drawing. Also, despite being installed in 1810, the tramway is missing: this may of course be because the artist chose to leave it out (fashionable society of the time preferring romantic rustic images and not wishing to be reminded of technology or industry).

The second drawing by Monro, entitled simply "Leckhampton", is worth reproducing not least for the detail it shows. Again one has to allow for artistic licence and, I suspect, rather contrived perspective, but it clearly shows the spire of St Peter's church and, above it, the Georgian wing of the Court. In the foreground is a large pond or dam and just beyond it across open ground is a stone-built kiln. The track meandering in on the right from the direction of the church, with a single cottage beside it, could well be Church Road. In the background looms Leckhampton Hill, apparently minus Devil's Chimney (which we know was in existence by this time).



The only record of a kiln in the area suggested by the drawing again comes from Croome's plan which shows a "lime kiln" just further down from the Bottom Incline on the west side of Leckhampton Road. It seems very likely that this was the kiln that Munro put into his drawing. The site adjacent to the kiln is described by Croome as "Brickyard and Land" and shown as having at least two sizeable patches of water in it, either or both of which could be the water feature shown on the drawing. Admittedly it is not easy to recreate this scene on the ground today, such have been the changes over 150 years, but a very reasonable conclusion would be that to get something like this view today, one would need to be standing on Leckhampton Road, roughly near to the junction with Chatsworth Drive and looking up towards the hill (see point B on sketch plan) [4]. This would then put Leckhampton Road in the bottom left of the picture with the small cottage beside it on the west side (possibly equating to one of the two small structures shown in roughly this position on Croome's plan).

So we now have two drawings by Munro of different views both of which, allowing for the vagaries of artistic licence, could be made to fit locations at the top end of Leckhampton Road. Perhaps this spot in Leckhampton had a special appeal for him in spite of the industrial nature of the area. Could he have been staying nearby, I wonder?

Author's postscript: Since the piece in February's *Smoke Signal* was written, James Hodsdon's valuable Gazetteer of Cheltenham has become available [5]. In it, on page 135 under "Pill", it is stated that, after flowing through Pilley, this stream may originally have merged with the Westal or Nolty Brooks (the latter apparently being the brook flowing from Delancey through Maida Vale) but that "at some point it was channelled to follow the line of the Old Bath Road to join the Chelt at Sandford Mill." We are not told when this re-channeling took place, but in 1874 the Pill was still apparently an open stream running down alongside the Old Bath Road. If this information is correct, then my earlier statement about the Pilley Brook leaving the Old Bath Road to pass through Maida Vale was misleading.

Footnotes:

- [1] This being due, I should stress, to the grey quality of the original drawing and not to any shortcoming in the newsletter production process.
- [2] For this I am indebted to David Hanks of Charlton Kings who came by the drawing in the course of his research into local historic photographs and works of art. It is reproduced here with his generous consent.
- [3] The traces of these two houses can still be detected in the undergrowth beside the tramway track.
- [4] Going by Croome's plan, the only other location offering this line of view with water in the immediate foreground would be beside Old Bath Road near Delancey which, on face value, would be too far away over fields to fit the drawing.
- [5] An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham, compiled by James Hodsdon; BGAS Record Series Vol.9 (1997).

T Moore-Scott

THIRLESTAIN HALL

A representative of the Chelsea Building Society kindly approached our Society in case we had any information regarding the history of Thirlestaine Hall, which they have now occupied for twenty-five years. Although it is somewhat outside Leckhampton's limits, we had a few extra details to offer. For example, we were able to add that for three years during the Second World War, when still known as the 'Thirlestaine Hall Hotel' it was occupied by the American Services of Supply (a fact which we had learned from one of the former US servicemen who contributed to *Leckhampton* in the Second World War). The Chelsea has kindly presented our Society with copies of an attractive booklet on the history of the Hall. One of the illustrations is of a brochure for the Hotel (presumably from the war period), which boasts of 'ARP shelters' among its facilities!

There is nevertheless a firm connection with Leckhampton. At the foot of a page dealing with the steam railway engine named 'Thirlestaine Hall' there is a photograph of the old Leckhampton Station, which is now the site of the Chelsea Building Society printing and stationery department at what has come to be known (again) as 'Liddington'.

Eric Miller

ST PETER'S CHURCHYARD SURVEY

Julian Rawes, who has been recording the details of the tombstones in Leckhampton Churchyard, is looking for some assistance in copying the inscriptions. If anyone is interested in this painstaking but valuable pursuit, please telephone Julian on Cheltenham 245255.

VISIT TO HIGHNAM CHURCH

The tour of Highnam Church on 18th June was much appreciated by those who took part. Our guide was Tom Fenton, the great grandson of Thomas Gambier Parry of Highnam Court, who built the church, the school and the rectory. Tom Fenton inherited the Court in 1966 but sold it in 1978 and now lives in the Old Rectory. He has written a history and guide to the church and was instrumental in launching the 1987 appeal for funds to repair the church and clean the wall paintings.

Gambier Parry was born in 1816 and orphaned when five years old. On coming of age he inherited great wealth from his father and grandfather who had been directors of the East India Company. He bought the Highnam Court estate in 1837. His first wife, Isabella, died in 1848. Most of their children died in infancy; one son, Hubert, survived to adulthood and is well known as Sir Hubert Parry, the celebrated composer. The church was conceived as a memorial to Isabella and the children: hence the dedication to the Holy Innocents. It was begun in 1849 and consecrated in 1851, a remarkable feat, considering that all building materials had to be carted by horses.

The famous wall paintings were executed by Gambier Parry personally. He was an accomplished artist and had made a study of Italian wall painting, adapting their techniques for the English climate. His work can also be seen in Gloucester and Ely Cathedrals and in Tewkesbury Abbey. He died in 1886.

The church is open on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons during the summer months (April to September) and the gardens of the Court on the first Sunday of the month from April to October.

SUMMER OUTING

This year's Summer Outing, on Wednesday 1st July, was organised by Charlton Kings Local History Society who arranged a visit to Upton-on-Severn, where we had about 2½ hours to look round and have lunch, and on to Madresfield Court, near Malvern.

Madresfield was special, in that it is not open to casual visitors, but only to organised parties by prior arrangement. We first had a briefing in the stable block where we were able to purchase guides to the house and gardens, then set off in three groups at intervals for a tour of the house. Madresfield Court has been handed down by inheritance to successive generations of the Lygon family since the twelfth century. William Lygon was created first Earl Beauchamp in 1815; the eighth and last Earl died in 1979 and the house is now occupied by his niece, Lady Morrison.

The 16th century Elizabeth Lygon has a Leckhampton connection. She married William Norwood, Lord of the Manor of Leckhampton. When she died in 1598 he placed a memorial to her in St Peter's Church.

A major reconstruction of the house, which is surrounded by a moat, was started in 1865, including the library and the chapel. The latter is lavishly decorated in the Arts and Crafts style. The work was commissioned in 1902 as a wedding present for the wife of the seventh Earl. The drawing room contains a priceless collection of French furniture, pictures and *objets d'art* assembled by Catherine, the first Countess Beauchamp, who made many purchases in Paris after the defeat of Napoleon.

After seeing round the house, we made our way to the garden centre where we had tea. This, with its own entrance, is open to visitors on a permanent basis. Many thanks to Charlton Kings LHS for organising such a memorable day. This will truly be a hard act to follow next year.

FROM THE EDITOR

Did you see in the *Echo* of 5th August that Anthony Christopher, who received a life peerage in the Queen's Birthday Honours, is taking the title Baron Christopher of Leckhampton? He now lives in Surrey, but retains happy memories of his earlier life in the village, where his sister still lives.

Copy for the November '98 issue should be sent to me at 28 Church Road by 15th October. Back numbers of *Smoke Signal* @ 25p per copy are available from the Treasurer, Tom Hewlett (tel 238617), who also has application forms for new members.

Roger Richards

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smoke signal

NUMBER 25, NOVEMBER 1998

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

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Without question, the Society's major achievement during the past few months has been the publication of the long-awaited book *Leckhampton in the Second World War*. It has been selling well, at the local Post Office and at bookshops in town, and sales direct to members and contributors have also helped. It is also gratifying to see that there has been a revival of interest in *Leckhampton Yesteryear* at the same time: do bear both books in mind when you are looking for a Christmas present!

You will see that there is a questionnaire enclosed with this newsletter. Please give it your close attention and return it in the envelope provided, as we rely on your responses when planning the future course of the Society.

Some of the questions relate to research and the active compiling of history. This need not be onerous or demanding and in fact can be good fun and quite sociable. As I have found myself, one thing leads to another and you can meet interesting people and visit interesting places as your pet project develops a momentum of its own.

The Society's first publication, 1894 - *the End of an Era*, is sadly out of print. However, we have had a number of requests for copies, from members and others, and it is also a fact that about half the present membership of the Society joined after the last copy was sold and might therefore wish to add a copy to their library. We are therefore making inquiries as to the feasibility of arranging a facsimile reprint; your responses are essential if we are to make an informed decision on whether to go ahead, and if so, how many copies to order. In the meantime, if any member has a spare copy that he or she could do without, the Society would gladly buy it back for resale. Equally, if you see one (reasonably priced!) at a second-hand book shop, buy it and we will reimburse you.

Finally, you may notice that this questionnaire includes no reference to any proposed change in the way we collect funds for the Society (eg by increasing the annual subscriptions while abolishing the members' donations at meetings). After mature reflection, your Committee considers that such a change would lead to other complications and has decided, at least for the present, to leave things as they are.

Eric Miller

LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council

DOMESDAY REVISITED
By T Moore-Scott

Like most others, I have tended to accept the traditional theory that the Saxon Brictric who held one of the manors of Leckhampton in the 11th century was the Brictric (or Beorhtric), son of Algar (or Aelfgar), and the prominent Saxon thegn and lord of Tewkesbury. The late Bruce Stait went on record to this effect in an earlier article, but at the same time he observed that there seemed to be some confusion and suggested that there perhaps were two Brictrics (1). [This view is supported by Amy Woolacott in a subsequent article (2) - Ed.]

It was of some interest to me therefore to come across a paper written by Ann Williams, one of the country's present-day experts on Domesday, in which a listing of all of the lands in Gloucestershire of Beorhtric, son of Aelfgar, contained no reference whatsoever to any manor in Leckhampton (3). An explanation for this is in another publication by this author where it is said that many Saxon lords managed to salvage at least some of their estates by formally paying homage to King William probably just prior to his triumphal return to Normandy in 1067 (4). Brictric appears to have been one of these, thereby enabling him to retain not only his earlier lands in Leckhampton but also the former lands of another (less fortunate) Saxon, Ordric. Ms Williams goes further to identify this Brictric as a kinsman of Asgot (or Osgot - presumably the Osgot who held the second manor of Leckhampton during King Edward's time) and certainly not Brictric of Tewkesbury whose fortunes appear to have collapsed totally after the Conquest.

The notion of two Brictrics is also supported by Dr John Moore (who goes so far as to describe the Leckhampton Brictric as a Norman "collaborator" and a "quisling"!). He pours cold water however on the theory that Brictric of Tewkesbury lost his lands because as a young man he had spurned Matilda, for which he claims there is no supporting evidence (5). So far no-one seems to have worked out what finally happened to that Brictric.

As regards William Leuric (or Leofric), the other estate holder in Leckhampton in 1086 (6), Ann Williams sees him as another "collaborator" thereby succeeding in holding on to at least a portion of his father Osgot's lands in Gloucestershire and elsewhere. If Brictric of Leckhampton really was a kinsman of Osgot, it follows he would also have been kinsman to Leuric (which, I suppose, could go a long way to explaining things!).

Footnotes:

(1) "Leckhampton in Norman Times"; Smoke Screen No 1, December 1992.

(2) Smoke Signal No 2, March 1993.

(3) "A West Country Magnate of the 11th Century: the Family, Estates and Patronage of Beorhtric Son of Aelfgar" by Ann Williams published in "Family Trees and the Roots of Politics", ed. K S B Keats-Rohan (Boydell & Brewer, 1997).

(4) "An Introduction to the Gloucestershire Domesday", ed. Ann Williams & R W H Erskin (London 1989).

(5) "From Anglo-Saxon to Anglo-Norman: North Gloucestershire in Domesday Book", 1998 Deerhurst Lecture, publication forthcoming.

(6) Whose name, according to Dr Moore, shows that he was actually half English

TWO FAMILIES OF LECKHAMPTON MUSICIANS

By Eric Miller

An obituary to Dr Janet Salsbury in *The Cheltenham Ladies College Magazine*, No 51, 1951, provides some interesting information on a member of a Leckhampton family, which lived at Sandford House, Leckhampton Road earlier this century. The string band of Mr Salsbury and the Misses Salsbury regularly performed at concerts and other local functions. At a service held in 1921 to raise money for the Memorial Chapel Fund at St Peter's, parts were played by Miss Janet Salsbury, Miss Edith Salsbury (violin) and Mrs W A Salsbury ('cello'). It was they who presented the new organ for the church in 1936, in memory of Mrs Mary Elizabeth Salsbury and her daughter Ethel Maria. The obituary reads:

Dr. Janet Salsbury, who died at her home in Leckhampton on March 6th, 1951, was one of three sisters who all served College with distinction for many years. She was a pupil of Domenico Barnett [see below], known to generations of College girls. Under him she took her LRAM and played in many College Concerts ... She joined the Music Staff in 1899, teaching Piano. Meanwhile she continued her musical studies with Dr. Keeton, of Peterborough Cathedral, under whom in 1905 she took the Mus Bac of Durham. She became Doctor of Music in 1910, the shortest period in which the work could be done. [She is also said to have been the first woman to obtain that degree from Durham - EHM] Later she took her FRCO and for some years was College Organist. Many of us remember the pride we felt in the beautiful robes 'Dr. Janet', as she was affectionately called, wore on State occasions.

"Besides teaching Piano, Organ, Harmony and Counterpoint in College, she was also on the staff of Trinity College, London, as Professor of Harmony and Counterpoint and was one of their valued examiners. She composed a number of songs and instrumental works and her analysis of Mozart's Pianoforte Sonatas is a standard work. She gave up teaching in College in 1926 but continued her active interest in music. It is not only for these amazing musical achievements that Dr Janet will be remembered, but for her unfailing kindness and ready help to those less gifted than herself, her utter modesty, selflessness and sincerity. She was in the real sense of the word 'a gentle woman', one who in her day and generation gave generously of her gifts and time to College; her work lives after her."

The above-mentioned Domenico Barnett was also a resident of Leckhampton and is listed in the 1891 Census as a "Professor of Music", residing at Cliff Cottage, Leckhampton Hill. He died in 1911 and was buried in Leckhampton churchyard, in the same grave as his father, John Barnett (1802 - 1890), who is described on his tombstone not only as "a great musician" but in particular as "The Father of English Opera", a claim which must puzzle all but the most ardent music historian today. *The Oxford Companion to Music* lists his only work of note as *The Mountain Sylph* (1834) but states that he also composed numbers of vocal solos and duets, spending his last 50 years in Cheltenham as a singing-master. This is borne out by an advertisement in Rowe's *Illustrated Cheltenham Guide* of 1850, proclaiming that "Mr John Barnett, Composer of the Operas *The Mountain Sylph*, *Fair Rosamond*, *Farinelli*, etc, gives lessons in English, Italian and German singing, at No 1, North Place, Pittville".

DELANCEY HOSPITAL
By Eric Miller

The Society is grateful to a member for presenting it with a copy of *A Brief History of Delancey Hospital*, produced in 1974 in celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Hospital's opening. The account was written by the late Mr R C Brookes, who was Hospital Secretary from 1952 until his retirement in 1979. What follows is a summary of the main historical facts and dates.

Delancey Hospital owes its origin to the generosity of Miss Susan Delancey, who in 1866 originally donated £5,000 for the building and equipping of a Hospital for "Fever or other Infectious Diseases". Shortly after making the donation, Miss Delancey died intestate, and due to certain complications and the questioned validity of the gift, it was six years later when the plans for a building were prepared and adopted.

The Smallpox Block of the Hospital was eventually opened by the Bishop of Gloucester on June 15th, 1874, and was named the Delancey Fever Hospital. During the ensuing years, additional blocks were erected, each for the accommodation of patients with a different disease. One of these buildings (the Scarletina Block) was named "Gabell Block", because of the munificence of the Rev. JHL Gabell. In 1878 a further generous donation of £2,000 from the same gentleman enabled the Trustees to erect the Administrative Block.

From the attached "Diary of Events" it will be seen that the Hospital developed through the years by these additional buildings, and continued to be administered in the original manner until handed over to the Local Authority in August 1914. Under the National Health Service the Hospital continued to function as a Fever Hospital. However, in 1950, with the ever-decreasing incidence of infectious diseases, it was decided to concentrate on providing accommodation and treatment for the elderly sick. Amongst the first admissions were patients from St. Paul's Hospital.

[As will be well known, other significant improvements, changes and additions to the facilities have been made since the account was first written. - EHM]

Select List of Significant Dates

April 3rd	1866	Deed of Trust donated, for gift of £5,000 from Miss Delancey.
April 7th	1866	Miss Susan Delancey died intestate.
May 3rd	1870	Gift declared invalid by Vice-Chancellor.
Sept 19th	1870	Meeting of Board of Governors, Cheltenham General Hospital. Committee of seven formed to select site.
Late	1870	Rev. J.H.L. Gabell gave £1,000 for purchase of site at Pilley.
April 3rd	1871	Final report of Committee to Board of Governors of Cheltenham General Hospital.
April 28th	1871	Deed of Endowment for the Delancey Fever Hospital.
May 19th	1871	First meeting of Trustees. Committee of Management appointed.
January	1872	Plans adopted. Prepared by J.H. Middleton.
	1872	Temporary huts erected for Smallpox cases on site of Hospital by Town Commissioners.

June		1873	Tender accepted.
June	15th	1874	Hospital opened by Bishop of Gloucester (Smallpox Block).
July	15th	1874	First patients admitted to Smallpox Block from temporary huts.
April		1877	Gabell Block opened for Scarlet Fever (present Gretton Ward and offices).
Summer		1880	Administrative Block opened (present Staff Wing, Kitchen etc.).
		1883	Stained glass window in corridor given by Viscount Marsham, an ex-patient.
		1883	Smallpox laundry built (one of present outbuildings).
Feb	24th	1884	Revd JHL Gabell died.
		1884	Nurse died of diphtheria whilst nursing patient.
		1887	Grounds laid out, and iron gates erected.
July		1890	Hospital connected to town's telephone system.
		1895	Wilson block opened (present Southam and Stanway Wards).
		1896	Land purchased North-East of Garden Wing (later allotments).
March		1898	Diphtheria Block opened by Mrs Russell (present Garden Wing).
		1907	Portrait of Miss Susan Delancey given by Miss Hammond, a relative.
		1913	Nurse Shalders, Probationer Nurse, died of Enteric Fever.
		1914	Trustees hand Hospital over to Local Authorities.
April	23rd	1926	Land granted to Cheltenham Corporation for road widening (a depth of 7 feet - frontage 190 feet).
August	9th	1935	Authority for conversion of Smallpox Block to Laundry.
July	5th	1948	Hospital became part of National Health Service.
		1950	First chronic sick patients admitted.
December		1951	No further infectious disease cases admitted.
			First elderly sick admitted.
		1961	Wards named after Cotswold villages.
October		1962	Pupil Nurse training commenced combined with St. Paul's Hospital.

LOCAL CHURCHES

The 1998-99 season began with a talk by Christopher Bishop, an architect and member of the Gloucester Diocese Advisory Committee on the Care of Churches. His main interest, therefore, is in church architects, particularly of the nineteenth century, and the way in which they adapted their designs and interior arrangements to reflect the "churchmanship" of their clients.

The story starts with the architect J.P. Pritchitt in York, who kept articulated clerks, which was the only form of professional training available for architects at the time. Three of his pupils came to Gloucestershire: Medland, Dawkes and J Middleton, who married Pritchitt's daughter and is best known locally for the enlargement of St. Peter's Leckhampton. He designed five new churches in the Cheltenham area: St. Mark's, All Saints, St. Stephen's, Holy Apostles Charlton Kings and St. Philip and St.

James Leckhampton. Dawkes was the architect for St. Peter's, Tewkesbury Road.

This flurry of church building was caused by the rapid expansion of Cheltenham, which until the 19th century had but one parish church, and its encroachment on the neighbouring historic parishes of Charlton Kings, Leckhampton and Prestbury. The need for more accommodation in church was met partly by enlargement of existing churches and the fitting of galleries, and partly by new construction. In the case of the Church of England these were at first district churches within the historic parish, but later became separate ecclesiastical parishes. The situation also encouraged the growth of the free churches and the building of chapels.

Church building was also stimulated by a religious revival following the rather complacent period of the late 18th century. The Evangelical movement, which laid great emphasis on preaching, was spearheaded by Francis Close who was curate in charge of the new Holy Trinity church in 1824 and Rector of Cheltenham, St. Mary's from 1826 to 1856. In these daughter churches of St. Mary's the pulpit was in a prominent position and often high up, almost on a level with the galleries. In St. Paul's (1831) it can be moved from the side to the centre on rails.

In contrast to the Evangelical churches, two Anglo-Catholic churches, All Saints Pittville (1868) and St. Stephen's (1883), were built with more lavish interiors and the altar as the focal point. Two architectural styles were prominent: Gothic revival, eg. Holy Trinity (1823) and St James (1829), and Greek revival, St. John's (1829 since demolished) and St. Paul's. An interesting exception is St. Peter's Tewkesbury Road (1849), which is in a neo-Norman style. It is interesting that Middleton was willing and able to submit designs of any type, according to the wishes of the church concerned.

MEMBERS' EVENING

There were four contributions to the Member's Evening on 15 October. Gordon Wynn spoke first in his capacity as a member of LEGLAG and introduced a display of photographs showing features of the "white land" in Leckhampton which is under threat from developers. He had joined a group of American students who had visited Leckhampton Hill to study the flora and fauna of a limestone area.

Eric Miller spoke about the former pottery in Charlton Lane, the site on which the psychiatric unit now stands. He showed slides of the buildings and of the items made there at the turn of the century, such as flowerpots, chimney pots and tiles. One member, Barbara Madams, produced a small clay vase found on the site. (A more detailed article will appear in due course.)

Alan Gill showed us a further selection from his portfolio of historic photographs, and John Randall rounded the evening off with a presentation with slides on the development of the Leckhampton Road. We are very grateful to members of the Committee who have been the most prolific contributors to the Members' Evenings over the past few years, but it would be nice to see some new faces in future.

BBC MILLENNIUM ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Oral history, the recording on tape of the memories of particularly our older inhabitants, has been on our agenda for some time: it was described as something that needs to be considered urgently as long ago as September 1994 in *Smoke Signal* No 8, and we had a talk on the subject in February 1996 by Ian Harris (*Smoke Signal* No 14).

We now have an opportunity to have the technical side of a project of this nature taken care of for us. BBC Radio Gloucestershire has been commissioned to produce an oral history of the County which will become part of the National Sound Archive, held by the British Library. The recordings will also be the basis for 16 documentaries about how Gloucestershire has changed through the century. These will be broadcast next autumn, and held for posterity by the Gloucestershire Library Service.

BBC Radio Gloucestershire is looking for 200 people to interview, people of all ages, from all over the County. The idea is to look back on the century from a variety of standpoints and to highlight the way in which Gloucestershire life has changed. The focus of the interviews is on the changing way of life rather than particular events. Interviews will range over family life, growing up, the impact of modern technology especially the motor car, growing incomes, changing communities and a changing sense of community.

It is felt that several of our members could contribute to this project, which would help raise the profile of the Society. Those who have given talks, based on personal knowledge or experience, to our meetings or members' evenings are prime candidates, but there may be others. Each person recorded will be offered a cassette of their interview to keep, and no doubt we shall be able to make a copy for the Society's archives.

Amy Woolacott has agreed to coordinate our response, but members might like to ask the Producer Andy Vivian or the Researcher Siobhan Logue (tel 01452 308585) for more information. If you are selected for interview, please keep Amy informed.

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

The meeting on 3 December is designed to be very informal with the theme of "Christmas Past". It will start with David Cox showing us his collection of Christmas telegrams, after which we will gather round with tea or coffee and mince pies (there will be no buffet supper as last year) and get "spontaneous". I have approached some people to give us an anecdote, or a short reading of prose or poetry on a Christmas theme, but there is room for more contributions. So please come prepared to contribute. If you can give me some indication of what you have up your sleeve in advance it will make for a more structured "spontaneity".

Roger Richards

FROM THE EDITOR

We welcome the following new members:

David and Peggy Maughfling
Priscilla Lansdown

Valerie Beddow has regretfully tendered her resignation from the Committee, on which she has served for the past eighteen months. We have been grateful to her for her loyal support, especially since Geoffrey's death, and look forward nevertheless to seeing her at Society meetings in the future.

Copy for the February '99 issue should be sent to me at 28 Church Road by 15th January.

You may have noticed that the cover price for non-members has increased to 50 pence. With recent issues comprising eight pages, we found we were not covering our costs, which include the distribution of a number of complimentary copies. This also means that a greater proportion of members' subscription revenue has been taken up by the cost of *Smoke Signal*. We are still offering previous numbers of *Smoke Signal* to members at 25 pence. They are available from the Treasurer, Tom Hewlett. We also have a supply of books for sale, held by the Chairman but usually available at the monthly meetings.

As always guests 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

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.

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Our programme of talks continues to draw good attendances, but the lasting success of a society such as ours is measured by the extent of its research into the village's history and by the range of its publications. We already have three books to our name. The latest venture, *Leckhampton in the Second World War*, has exceeded most people's expectations, and there are still steady sales of *Leckhampton Yesteryear*. However, *1894 - the End of an Era* is now out of print. Your answers to the questionnaire that was sent out with the last issue of *Smoke Signal* suggest that there is at present insufficient demand to justify a reprint. If you come across a copy for sale in a second-hand bookshop, though, please buy it for the Society's stock and we will reimburse you.

Smoke Signal regularly includes a few research articles, but it can only offer limited space. We should soon be able to produce our first *Research Bulletin*, in A4 format, similar to the bulletins and journals issued regularly by the history societies in Cheltenham and Charlton Kings. We hope to issue it in the late spring/early summer, with a number of longer and well-researched articles on subjects of local interest, and hope that members will support the venture.

There appears to be quite a lot of enthusiasm for joining in a research group. With this in mind, I shall call a short meeting after the talk on 18 February for those who are interested, when we can discuss some possible lines to pursue. (If anyone cannot be present at that meeting, please get in touch with me separately.) It should be possible to give a progress report at the Members' Evening on 15 April.

A few people also expressed an interest in oral history - a very important aspect of local history recording. Marilyn West, who has had experience of it in her research on the Bath Road area, has agreed to take charge of this project and will make suitable arrangements later in the year. In the meantime, it is important to identify suitable interviewees. This will be something else to discuss at the Members' Evening.

LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Finally, the Revd Adrian Berry has allowed me to copy the index of all those buried in Leckhampton churchyard, drawn up in 1914 by Leonard Barnard to accompany his detailed plan of the churchyard. It also complements the database of tombstone inscriptions prepared by Julian Rawes (see *Smoke Signal* No 21, November 1997). If anyone wants to know more, please get in touch with me.

Eric Miller

GENEALOGY

This was the title of the talk given by Colin Chapman to our November meeting, but it could equally well have been called Family History. Mr Chapman is a Fellow of the Society of Genealogists and Vice President of the National Society for Family History, as well as being President of the Gloucestershire Family History Society. Genealogists specialize in the production of family trees and pedigree charts, whereas the family historian is interested in all aspects of the life and times of his subject. Family history thus tends to merge with local history.

Colin Chapman's interest in the subject was triggered by his coming across an old family Bible in which was recorded the names of members of his family engaged in the shoe trade in Northampton. In his talk he went on to describe the various sources available to the family historian and the methodology involved. A basic principle is that you start with a well-documented person and work backwards.

The most important source for family history is the civil registry of births, marriages and deaths, which started in 1837 in England and Wales and in 1855 in Scotland. Local registrars send their records quarterly to the Registrar General and these records, formerly kept at Somerset House, are now kept at the Family Record Centre, Myddleton St, Islington, near Sadlers Wells Theatre.

For personal records before 1837 one has to rely on the (Church of England) parish registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, many of which have not survived to be deposited with the Diocesan archives in the County Record Office. In those days a marriage solemnised in the Established Church was the only one officially recognised, except in the case of Quakers and Jews who had a special exemption, so that the agitation for civil registration came from the non-conformists.

Another fruitful source for family history is wills, which become a public record once probate is granted. Up to 1858 probate was granted by the Ecclesiastical Courts; the civil probate records are now held in First Avenue House, High Holborn in London. As well as listing the beneficiaries, wills make fascinating reading for the details of property they contain.

Another important source for family history is the census returns. A national census has been taken every ten years since 1801, and since 1841 the results have been collated centrally. Before that informal censuses were made by churches, and lists of

people are contained in various documents such as Poll lists (who voted for whom), Militia muster rolls, taxation lists and school log books. The Mormon Church provides a very useful service, which is not confined to members; in their family history centres they have the 1881 census returns on microfiche and CD Rom.

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

At our January meeting we welcomed back Gordon Ottewell to speak about 'The Evolution of the Village School.' His talk took the form of a historical survey, followed by a slide show of school buildings of various ages and styles, many of which are now private dwellings or used for some other purpose than that for which they were built.

The first schools, dating from the 15th century, were endowed by benefactors such as the King, the Church or rich landowners. These were mainly grammar schools and so were not village schools as such. The ordinary parish was without a school until the Charity schools came along in the early 18th century. These were supported by local subscription but controlled by the Established Church. The free churches set up their own schools, but these were found mainly in the towns.

The provision of Charity schools was very patchy, but the coverage was greatly increased when the National schools appeared from the early 19th century onwards. They took their name from the National Society for the Education of the Poor according to the principles of the Church of England, and became the most usual type of school found in villages.

The Government first became involved in public education in 1833 when grants were awarded for the building of voluntary schools. In return a system of inspection was set up in 1845. The big step came with the 1870 Education Act, which made provision for universal primary education. Increased grants were made to Church schools and, where they did not exist, schools were established under local Boards. The 1902 Education Act extended state provision to secondary education and brought the Church schools under the control of county councils.

THE COTSWOLD POTTERIES

My researches into the local potteries and brickworks show that they were in existence possibly as early as the 1830s, first as the Naunton Brickworks, then the Cheltenham and later the Cotswold Potteries (but not, it seems, 'Leckhampton'). They were in the hands of several owners until they went out of business in about 1912. There must still be many examples of their work to be seen in Leckhampton. I should be particularly interested if anyone knows of bricks or tiles with any of the names Thackwell, Thomson, Clayton, Hooper or Godwin on the back. I should not be surprised if the green ornamental tiles that decorate the porches of the red-brick houses near the bottom of Leckhampton Road are from this local source. Any information would be greatly appreciated!

Eric Miller (Tel 526461)

A BURIED "FIND" IN MOOREND PARK ROAD

By Terry Moore-Scott

(Author's note: I'm not unused to having people say: Where on earth did you dig up this story?", but the fact on this occasion is that this is one that I literally did dig up!)

Imagine the surprise recently felt by the resident of a certain turn-of-the-century house in Moored Park Road when, in the course of having a raised rockery bed in her garden dug out, a rather strange contraption of iron rods and wheels began to appear buried in the ground. Convinced that, whatever it was, it had to be old and of interest, she contacted the Cheltenham Museum. This led to yours truly visiting the lady in question armed with spade and trowel in order to investigate.

Careful excavation eventually revealed the almost intact remains of a highly intriguing device (see rough sketch (not to scale) at fig.1). It comprised a rectangular wrought iron frame approximately 1.4m long, with a pair of cast-iron wheels at one end and, at the other, a single centrally-placed wheel. Mounted at the centre was a large drum-shaped reel with flat galvanised sides. Cranks operating off the ends of the single wheel axle were linked to connecting rods leading back to the sides of the reel drum.

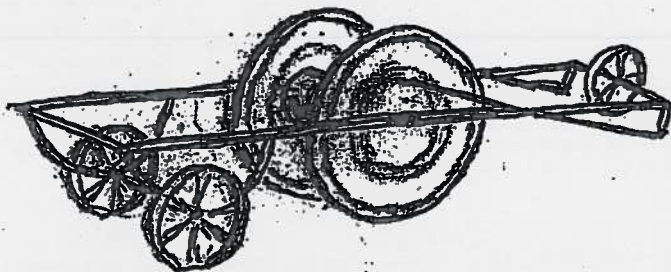


Fig. 1

What it would have been used with was far from clear. Ideas ranged from fencing wire to possibly a fire hose, but the consensus at the local Museum was that it was most likely a horticultural hose reel. This was also the conclusion of the London-based Museum of Garden History who were able to produce, from their commercial catalogues collection, illustrations of similar, though not identical, equipments that were around in the late 1890's and early 1900's. Fig.2 shows one of these (along with its remarkably sartorial user!) dating from around 1897.

PORTABLE GARDEN HOSE REEL.

No. 89.



Price £2. 15s. Od.

Fig. 2

All the devices on record seem, however, to have had some sort of handle for pushing or pulling and a handle for rotating the reel; they were also constructed to give convenient height for use. We are therefore left to fathom out for ourselves how our local device actually worked. It would appear that trundling it along on the pair of wheels would have allowed the reel to unwind freely; changing over to the single wheel would then have automatically rewound it. Ingenious perhaps in a Heath Robinson way but hardly user-friendly!

Has any member ever encountered a contraption like this? If so, I would be very interested to know.

SNIPPETS FROM THE LOCAL PAPERS

Alan Gill has supplied these extracts from his research.

From the Cheltenham Chronicle of 4 February 1830

During the severest weather of the last week, a tribe of gypsies were encamped under Leckhampton Hill, where an interesting and beautiful gypsy woman was taken in labour and safely delivered of a fine boy. Several charitable ladies of Charlton Kings, hearing of the circumstance, and pitying the condition of the poor creature lying in that situation on the ground, and only protected from the inclemency of the season by a tent, collected a number of half-crowns and gave them to her husband, offering him at the same time a comfortable room for his wife in the village, until she recovered. He introduced them to his wife, who received the half-crowns, but declined the offer of the room, saying that 'if she or any of her tribe were to be confined in a room, they would be sure to be unlucky'.

From the Cheltenham Chronicle of 6 February 1909

THE RIFLE RANGE - LECKHAMPTON LADIES

Emulating the example of their sisters at Charlton Kings, the ladies of Leckhampton who are interested in miniature rifle shooting have formed themselves into a club with the title 'Ladies Rifle Club, Leckhampton'. Arrangements have been made for practice to take place on two afternoons in the week on the range used by the Leckhampton Working Men's Rifle Club. Of the latter Captain Elwes of Leckhampton Court is President, and Mrs. Elwes, his wife, is President of the new organisation. Mrs. Boyd Cardew is the Vice President, the Hon Secretary and Treasurer is Mrs. C. Ward of Trelands, and Lady Winterbotham, Miss Ethel Smith, Miss Barnard, Miss Witts, Miss Wood, and Miss Bourne constitute the Committee. Mr. R. Cotton is acting as instructor, and Mr. P. A. Little, the Hon Secretary of the men's club, is interesting himself in the venture. The club was given a successful start-off on Monday afternoon, Mrs. Elwes firing the first shot. Other ladies followed, and one made the coveted 'bull'. There are already about 40 members of the club, and it is hoped that before long there will be at least 50. If the 'shootettes' continue to grow in such numbers in other places as they do in Cheltenham, a much-discussed play now running in London will need amending in certain particulars. A Mrs. Brown is represented as being overpowered by the foreign invader. Future dramatists will be able to bring Mrs. Brown to the rescue.

From The Examiner of 25 May 1911

NAUNTON PARK RFC CELEBRATION DINNER

Next in prowess to the Town Club, and more successful in the field last season, the Naunton Park Club is entitled to be proud of its position in the local world of Rugby football. Not once were its colours lowered to an opposing team in 1910-11. Won 22, drawn 2. 340 points to 12. A celebration dinner was held at the 'King William', Upper Bath Road, on Monday night. About 40 people sat down with J. D. Bendall, the Hon Treasurer, at the head of the table in the absence of the President, Major Shewell. There was remarkable enthusiasm and it evinced a lung power in the execution of the 'warhoop' that went far to account for the terror inspired by the club in the breasts of its opponents:

'No coffee, no coffee, no coffee, No cocoa, no cocoa,
no cocoa. No tea, no tea, no tea, But beer'.

When shouted in unison by 40 stentorian voices it sounds like the last word of defiance possible to British lips. The whoop was, we believe, borrowed by the Town Club on the occasion of its visit to France some time ago, and made a profound impression on the Gaul. Alf Bendall was described as one of the best half-backs Cheltenham has ever produced. The club was started in a back room in Clare Street Hall many years ago. Toasts were followed by abundant singing. In strict obedience to the law the company dispersed at 11 o'clock.

RECENT BOOKS

by Eric Miller

A Brief History of Naunton Park, compiled by Ann Gibson, describes an area on the fringe of Leckhampton that should be familiar to all our members. John Milner has supplied historical details, and local residents have provided reminiscences, while the Headteacher has written a chapter on the early days of the school (which several of our members once attended). The park was opened in 1893 and the sports field and ornamental gardens were gradually developed later, with rustic arches. Other notable features, now disappeared, were a thatched bandstand (removed in 1925), an ornate drinking fountain and an avenue of poplar trees. The park attracted large audiences to Salvation Army services and to concerts, some being given by the Emmanuel Church Choir. In 1899 Mr & Mrs Hay left a sum of money to build 12 cottage homes for the aged poor, with a resident nurse. The school was begun in 1906 and during the First World War was taken over as a Red Cross hospital for wounded servicemen. For nearly 30 years between the wars its Headmaster was Arthur Dye, later Mayor of Cheltenham.

The Friends of Naunton Park aim to raise funds for refurbishing the gardens, in keeping with a plan which is reproduced in the book. Ann Gibson will bring a display relating to Naunton Park to the April Members' Evening and copies of her book (price £2-50) will be available for members to purchase.

Victorian Legacy, by the Revd Stanley Rudman (£6-50 from Maltby's or Wesley Owen), describes (in several cases with photographs) the 80 or so monuments that adorn the walls of Christ Church together with accounts of the individuals and their families. Many of these had distinguished careers in the Empire and the armed forces or were wealthy and influential figures in Cheltenham's development.

Christ Church has no graveyard of its own, and until the creation of Cheltenham's Municipal Cemetery (in 1864) its worshippers had to be buried in other local churchyards, and several were brought to Leckhampton. These include even the Revd Joseph Fenn, Vicar of Christ Church 1859-1884, of whom it is related that "the route of the funeral procession to Leckhampton from Christ Church was lined with many hundreds of people, and clergy of all denominations attended". More recently, among the names listed on Christ Church's First World War Memorial, Major Douglas Reynolds, VC, has a grave in Leckhampton churchyard.

There is an interesting aside on the background to the renaming of the house called "Malvern Lawn" in Malvern Road to "Drake House". The house was originally built for Sir Francis Henry Drake, whose memorial in Leckhampton church claims that he was "the last surviving male descendant of the great circumnavigator". - a questionable claim, as I point out in my *History of Leckhampton Church*. Stanley Rudman adds more detail on the circumstances of Francis Henry's birth.

The author finishes by asking how these people, who came to Cheltenham from all over the world and gave the town a cosmopolitan air, saw themselves. A similar question applies to all those who are simply known as names today but who populate our studies of the past. It is part of the excitement - and difficulty - of pursuing historical research to try and find out more about their characters and personalities.

OBITUARY

It is with much regret that we record the death of one of our members, Lieutenant Commander John Lansdown, and we extend our condolences to Priscilla and her family. St Peter's Church was full for the funeral service on 8th December, a tribute to the affection in which he was held by many friends in different walks of life. He served in the Engineering Branch of the Royal Navy, retiring in 1960. After eleven years in industry he became Physics Master at Cheltenham Ladies' College, from which he retired in 1986. The highlight of his naval career was in the Korean War, when he served on the aircraft carrier *Glory*. In 1992 he published *With the Carriers in Korea*, and his talk to the Society on the subject at the April 1998 Members' Evening (see *Smoke Signal* No 23) will be long remembered. He bore his long illness with such fortitude that few outside his immediate family knew how ill he was.

FROM THE EDITOR

We welcome the following new member:

Timothy Eaton

Copy for the May '99 issue should be sent to me at 28 Church Road by 15th April. With this issue will be enclosed the notice and agenda for the AGM on 20th May.

This is the second issue with the increased cover price to non members of 50 pence. We are still offering back numbers of *Smoke Signal* to members at 25 pence. They are available from the Treasurer, Tom Hewlett. We also have a supply of books for sale, held by the Chairman but usually available at the monthly meetings.

As always guests 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.

Roger Richards

Data Protection Act

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Issue free to members - otherwise 50 pence



smoke signal

NUMBER 27, MAY 1999

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

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

The speaker at our February meeting was Bernard Baker, a photographer specializing in nature studies and industrial architecture, who gave a talk with slides entitled 'Glimpses of Gloucestershire'. He illustrated the distinctive features of the three main areas of the County: the Cotswolds, the Severn plain and the Forest of Dean. His close-up pictures of wild flowers and insects were particularly impressive.

At the March meeting Hayden Gardiner brought along a fascinating collection of 'Mystery Objects from a Bygone Age', which he has researched and restored. One could only wonder at the ingenuity and workmanship displayed by the, mainly Victorian, inventors who designed these gadgets for use in the home, the garden and on the farm, and the craftsmanship of those who made them without the benefit of modern power tools. The brass work shone, thanks to Mr Gardiner's loving care with *Hot Spot* cleaner; he does not recommend Brasso!

MEMBERS' EVENING, 15 APRIL by Eric Miller

The programme proved to be an interesting and varied one. The first item was presented by Ann Gibson, who is Chairman of the Friends of Naunton Park and has recently compiled a book on the history of the Park. She described how it had originally developed from the reminiscences of local residents, but others had also supplied advice and written contributions. The Park had undergone significant improvements thanks to the Friends' fundraising efforts. Sales of the book go towards this, and our Society has obtained some copies, which will be available for purchase at future meetings. On Sunday 20 June several of the neighbouring gardens will be open to the public, as a further fundraising event.

There followed some tales relating the Second World War. I had been in touch with a gentleman, now retired in the West Country, who had been on the British permanent staff at Leckhampton Court. He had had a room in the Court under a twisted red-brick Tudor chimney, which looked toward the Malvern Hills. Climbing up Leckhampton Hill had been one of his favourite pursuits, as it

LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council

was for many of the Germans who were not subjected to many restrictions at that stage. He recalled that on the day before the camp closed down all the outlying POWs were brought in and remarks that they must have been terribly crowded that night. (The date of departure was 22 May 1948; a photograph of the POWs about to board the train at Leckhampton station is reproduced in *Leckhampton in the Second World War*.) In this connection, I recommend an excellent book *Thresholds of Peace - German Prisoners and the People of Britain 1944-1948*, by Matthew Barry Sullivan, available from Cheltenham Library.

A relative of Major Harris, who had at one time been commandant of the POW camp, had loaned the Society some elegantly illustrated programmes for concerts put on by the prisoners. One was for a recital of music by Schubert: piano solos, songs, and *Ave Maria* arranged as a duet for piano and 'bugle-horn'. An 'Austrian Show' included a 'Jodler-Quartett', a Schuhplattler dance, some jazz and a conjuror.

By the way, we still hear reports that there were Italian prisoners at the Court (as we admitted in the book), but we still need specific evidence, including dates and names. If anyone can help, please let me know.

Next, an attempt was made to sort out the various conflicting tales recounted last October in correspondence in *The Gloucestershire Echo* regarding a German airman, named as Friedl Dorner, who bailed out of his aircraft on the night of 13-14 August 1940. One report stated that he had been a crew member of a Heinkel HE111 whose pilot had subsequently regained control and continued on with the rest of the crew and landed back in France. This seemed to be corroborated by the recollection of one family then living in the Old Bath Road, who spoke of the capture of an airman and his temporary detention in the cellars of the Wheatsheaf. Another account related to a Junkers JU-88 which, during the afternoon of presumably 14 August, either:

- a. collided with a Miles Master training plane near South Cerney, or
- b. was shot down by the pilot of a Hurricane from RAF Kemble, or
- c. was shot down by a Spitfire from RAF Aston Down.

In all these three versions, the Junkers crashed and as did the RAF aircraft. In the case of the Hurricane, this aircraft was itself shot down by the rear-gunner of the Junkers. (A member of the audience said that the RAF Association possessed a fragment of that same aircraft.)

Concluding the review, I observed that Unteroffizier (Sergeant) Friedl Dorner appeared as a common denominator, it seemed too much of a coincidence for there to have been more than one airman of that name parachuting into Gloucestershire at the same time. In the Old Bath Road case, the airman's name was not given, and no-one else living in Leckhampton at that time appears to have heard of the incident - not even two particular members of the Society, who might have been expected to have known about it, if anyone did. As one of the *Echo* correspondents says, "there was clearly much confusion over the incident[s], and the truth will now probably never be known".

The final item was a further example of how unreliable memory can be, and of how stories may become embroidered as a result of 'wishful thinking'. I had come across a note left by the late Bruce Stait, when he was preparing the book *1894 - the End of an Era*. He had begun to question accepted belief, repeated in various published sources, including the official handbook to the Sue Ryder Home, that John Hargreaves had built the north wing of the Court during the Prince of Wales's affair with Lillie Langtry, with a special suite for them above the library. Bruce had written to a relative of John Hargreaves, who had been unable to substantiate the story. There was, for example, no record in the Court visitors' book of the time.

I decided to check the actual dates of John Hargreaves's occupation of the Court and of the Prince's relationship with Lillie Langtry. The Prince first met Lillie in May 1877, and their affair lasted over the next two and a half years. It was therefore over by late 1880, when it was discovered that Lillie was pregnant, and the Prince sought companionship elsewhere. It was only after the birth of her daughter, in Paris, that Lillie Langtry took to the stage. (She opened the new theatre in Regent Street - now the Everyman - in 1891.)

John Hargreaves occupied the Court from 1872 onwards, at first only as tenant, and he did not become the owner until 1894, when the Court and the estate were sold. It was only later that decade that he was able to build the north wing which we now see from Church Road. This was fifteen years or more after the Prince's affair had been broken off. I was therefore forced to conclude that there was no truth in the story - reluctantly, since it is always a pity to destroy a good story which adds glamour and reflected glory to the locality, but as historians we must stick to proven facts, as far as is humanly possible.

More honours for the Society's recent Book!
(Extract from the Review Editor's Round-up for 1988
published in the *Local Historian* magazine)

"It has, once more, been an excellent year with a whole spectrum of local history publications from amateur to professional appearing. Although the distinction can still be made there is little in terms of presentation and production to differentiate them. What follows is my selection of those that caught my eye.

"*Leckhampton in the Second World War* [was] produced by members of the local history society. For anyone contemplating such a study this book is a must as it shows just what can be achieved through oral history and intense reading of contemporary newspapers. The section on the local PoW camp is absolutely fascinating when one considers how ephemeral such developments were in our landscape and society."

(*The Local Historian* is the official journal of the British Association for Local History, to which our Society is affiliated.)

MORE SNIPPETS FROM THE LOCAL PAPERS
selected by Alan Gill
(Courtesy of Cheltenham Public Library and the Editor of the
Gloucestershire Echo)

From the Cheltenham Chronicle of 5 September 1908

POACHING ON CHARLTON COMMON

Oliver Green and William Cooper, Leckhampton men, were charged at Cheltenham Police Court on Thursday with game trespass on Charlton Common on Sunday, 30th August. They pleaded guilty 'to a certain extent'.

John Martin, gamekeeper in the employ of Mr H O Lord, on Sunday morning saw the defendants on the common, the shooting rights of which were the property of Mr Lord. Green pulled up some snares, and witness went to him. Searching him, he found in his pocket 8 snares and one rabbit. On Cooper he found neither snare rabbit.

The men said they did not know Mr Lord held the shooting rights over the common, over which anybody had a right to walk. Green added that they had found the snares and the rabbit and added 'of course we picked it up, same as anybody would'.

The Chairman, Mr Turnbull, said the defendants' contention about being on common land had no value. It was common land only for those who went there for a proper purpose. Green would be fined 10 shillings and costs (6 shillings) and Cooper 5 shillings.

From the Cheltenham Chronicle of 20 February 1915

LECKHAMPTON'S RECORD - "EVERY AVAILABLE MAN DRAWN TO THE FLAG"

According to the statement of the Revd F W Bidwell, the priest in charge at Leckhampton, this suburb of Cheltenham has done remarkably well for King and Country in the matter of recruits since the war began; something like 100 men have disappeared into the military training centres, and only the women with their children and the old men remain.

This gratifying announcement was made at Tuesday night's recruiting meeting in the village hall, when Mr George Dimmock presided over an audience which might certainly with advantage have been considerably strengthened numerically. Mr Harry Whitehorn, the official speaker sent down from London, gave a review of the war, its origins and issues, which impressed his hearers so much that their applause frequently cut his sentences short and caused no little embarrassment to him in the construction of his narrative. Some of the passages in the speech were full of anger and scorn at the German Ruler's immoral attitude of mind and his hypocritical pretensions to Christian character, while in other places the address sounded notes of pathos quite irresistible in their appeal. Germany had been placed outside the circle of civilised communities; it had conclusively demonstrated that it was the enemy of the world, and must be completely crushed as a military power before the rights and liberties of England can be finally preserved.

The Chairman said that it was quite clear that nearly every available man had gone from Leckhampton; but if there should happen to be one or two left, he was quite sure they would join their comrades without further delay. Mr F J Bennett, in moving a vote of thanks to chairman and speaker, said their county, at all events needed no convincing as to the seriousness of the struggle in which England was engaged. On 6th August, when he was away at Bournemouth on holiday, his only son telegraphed for permission to join his old regiment. "I never felt prouder of my boy than at that moment" he said, and I wired the reply, "Certainly, join up at once, England is the only country worth fighting for."

From the Cheltenham Chronicle of 6 March 1915

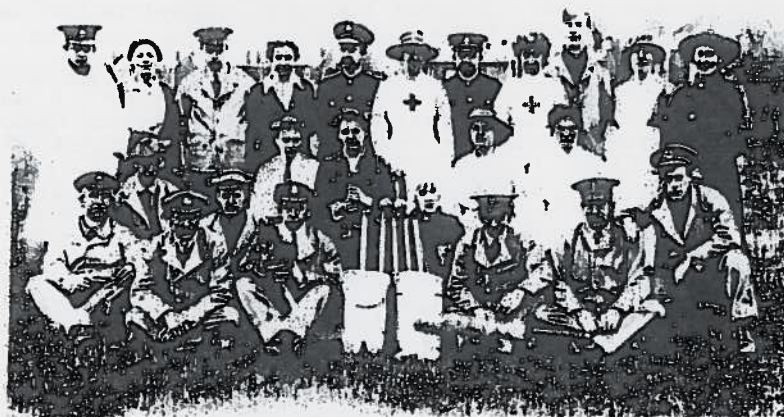
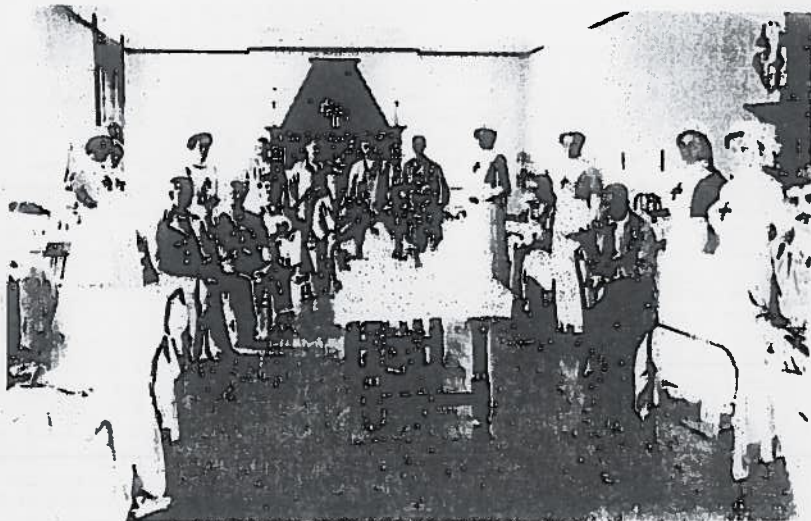
ANOTHER RED CROSS HOSPITAL - LECKHAMPTON COURT MOBILISED

Leckhampton Court near Cheltenham, which was placed at the disposal of the Red Cross Society at the outbreak of the war by Captain and Mrs Elwes, having been fully mobilised, on Saturday received its first batch of patients, 22 in number, these coming from Gloucester and New Court, Cheltenham. Leckhampton Court will, we understand, be utilised more or less as a convalescent home for the hospitals in the county generally, and it would be difficult to imagine a place more favoured by nature for that purpose. Situate several hundred feet above sea level, the fine old mansion, some portions of which date back to the time of Henry VIII, is sheltered from the east by the rocky bluff of Leckhampton Hill. To the west it commands a lovely view of almost the whole of the Severn Valley. Its own grounds are spacious and beautiful, and among the amenities which will be greatly appreciated by the soldiers is a field which may be utilised for football, and a big lawn where the ancient game of bowls may be enjoyed. A picturesque avenue of lime trees leads from the courthouse to the Parish Church of Leckhampton. The whole house is available for hospital purposes, and has been mobilised for 54 patients. There are two small separate wards accommodating four beds each, a series of small rooms with inter-communication taking together 15 beds, the great sitting-room (an apartment of noble proportions) takes 17 beds, and a smaller room 5. There is also super-abundant accommodation for the staff, for the house is a very large one - some of its architectural details are of considerable interest. A large recreation room contains a full-sized billiard table.

The mobilisation of the hospital has been carried out by the Leckhampton (Gloucestershire 42nd) detachment of the Red Cross Society, who are in charge, with Mrs Chas Ward as commandant, Miss Lilian Wishaw as quartermaster, and Nurse Hill as superintendent. There are 6 trained nurses on the staff, and as the Leckhampton detachment is 50 strong, there will be no difficulty on the score of relief nurses. There are, we are told, many splendid nurses in the detachment. Dr Pearson is the hospital doctor, and Dr McAldowie, who has lent the detachment much assistance both before and since the war, will act as assistant medical officer and reside at the hospital. The Red Cross men of the Leckhampton sections of the Lilleybrook detachment, under Quartermaster Smith and Section Leaders Kenworthy and Fenton, will serve the hospital as required. The two sections now total 28 members. In the mobilisation of the hospital the commandant has received very great assistance from

various private friends of the detachment, the Mayoress's Linen League, and a number of the trading houses of Cheltenham. Shirer and Haddon and Dicks and Sons Ltd each provided 25 beds and their bedding. The Gas Company has rendered great assistance in fitting up the house with burners and stoves; Messrs Fisher and Sons have provided kitchen utensils, Mr Arthur Bessell china, Sharp and Sons slippers, the Oriental Café Co (per Mr Marfell) tables and table utensils, John Lance and Co Ltd mackintosh, and Messrs Fletcher and Palmer surgical appliances. At the present time the great needs of the hospital are comfortable chairs and floor rugs.

[The photographs below first appeared in the Leckhampton Court VAD Hospital souvenir booklet, published in 1919.]



From the Cheltenham Chronicle of 1 February 1930

NEW BYPASS ROAD

At Thursday's meeting of Cheltenham Rural District Council a letter was read from the Town Clerk of Cheltenham, Mr. R. O. Seacombe, asking for a representative to be appointed to a committee to discuss the construction of a new bypass road, which will take London - South Wales traffic out of the town. The road will leave the Gloucester road just west of Arle Court and run to Hatherley Road, across country to Brizen Pitch, and thence to Kidnappers Lane and Church Road, Leckhampton. It will cross Leckhampton Road at the Animals Welfare Association premises and thence to Sandy Lane, Cirencester Road, Little Herberts, and across country to the main London road. Captain Leschallas was elected as the Council's representative on the committee.

[The Animals Welfare Association premises were at Roselands, immediately below the Ladies College Sanatorium. E. W. Craddock was listed as the occupier in 1929.

The project was eventually postponed indefinitely on financial grounds. The proposed route described above passes through areas which were quite undeveloped at the time, namely Warden Hill, Brizen Farm, The Vineries, Collum End Farm and Southfield. Whether you regard this scheme as a lost opportunity or a blessing in disguise depends, perhaps, on whether you live on one of the estates since built in these areas!]

OUR WARTIME EVACUEES

They came with smiles, well, just the odd frown,
To seek refuge here in Cheltenham Town,
And though we were bombed and had many a fright,
Mercifully it wasn't a Blitzing night after night.

So from shattered London, Birmingham, Plymouth too,
They settled in, bravely made friends anew.
Mind, we did think them a bit funny, but only becuz
They talked a bit funny - well not like uz!

It can't have been easy away from their own,
But our evacuees coped very well with hardly a moan.
So I hope they'll recall, and not with a frown,
Their stay in the wartime in old Cheltenham Town.

Geoff Capper.

FROM THE EDITOR

Annual General Meeting

Enclosed with this issue you will find the notice and agenda for the Annual General Meeting on 20th May, with the new season's programme starting in September printed on the back.

Summer Outing

Also enclosed is a notice with reply slip for the Summer Outing on 22nd July.

Outing to Kew

If you wish to go on the outing to Kew (to visit the PRO and/or the Botanical Gardens), don't forget that the latest date for applications, using the form sent separately to each member, is 8th May. Contact John Randall, tel 527904, if necessary.

We welcome the following new members:

Miss Irene Allen,
Mrs Kathleen Baillie,
Mr Fred and Mrs Anne Ashmore.

Copy for the August '99 issue should be sent to the Editor by 15th July.

We are still offering back numbers of *Smoke Signal* to members at 25 pence. They are available from the Treasurer, Tom Hewlett. We also have a supply of books for sale, held by the Chairman but usually available at the monthly meetings.

As always guests 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

No 28, August 1999

Editor: Eric Miller
20 Collum End Rise
Tel: 01242 526461

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I take over the Chairmanship of the Society with its reputation as high as it has ever been. Thanks largely to our publications, we have become known nationally in the field of local history. In particular, *Leckhampton in the Second World War*, when reviewed in *The Local Historian*, was held up as a model for anyone contemplating a similar project. You may rest assured that I shall do my level best to maintain our high standards. In this I am supported by Eric Miller as Vice-Chairman and a very strong Committee, with all four elective places filled and an additional member co-opted by the Committee at its first meeting on 21st June. The responsibilities of the officers of the Society are well-known, but at that meeting we allocated (or confirmed) responsibilities to the members as follows:

Alan Gill	Photographic archive
Marilyn West	Oral history
David Lyall	Assistant to Treasurer
Tom Lyall (co-opted)	Membership records and distribution
Ron Walker	Liaison with Programme Secretary.

(Subsequently Joan Launchbury, who has served the Society as Programme Secretary since its inception, has asked to be relieved of that task, which Ron Walker will perform in full in future. Joan has been responsible for the success of our past programme of talks, many of which were her own suggestions, she has contacted the speakers beforehand and seen to administrative details. The Society has good reason to thank her.)

As you will see from the enclosed card, we again have an interesting and varied programme for the 1999-2000 season. Don't forget that the meetings for the rest of this year will be on Tuesdays; next year we revert to Thursdays. I am anxious to involve more members in contributing to the Members' Evenings, the first of which is on 12th October. If anyone has read or researched an interesting item, however brief, please let me or another Committee member know, preferably before our next Committee meeting on 31st August.

Roger Richards

LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

[A summary of the Minutes of the 7th AGM of the Society held on 20 May is printed below and will be used for reference at the next AGM. Some of the business is covered elsewhere in this newsletter and is not repeated here.]

22 members attended, and apologies for absence were received from 16 members.

The Chairman's Report. Eric Miller reported that the Society's activities during the past year had maintained the already established momentum. Meetings had continued to attract good attendances, and the talks had in general met with approval. During the coming year there would be several talks on subjects relevant to Leckhampton: David Lyall on the Transport Scene, John Milner on Fullwood Park and the Zoo, and Eve Andrew again next March. The joint outings with Charlton Kings have proved to be enjoyable and instructive: to Highnam Church, and to Upton and Madresfield Court. Next year, to celebrate the Millennium, it is suggested that we might organise a midsummer 'Perambulation' of the village.

On the publications side, *Leckhampton in the Second World War* had met with acclaim, and not just locally. The 750 copies had almost all been sold, and supplies of *Leckhampton Yesteryear* were now virtually exhausted. The small profit on these books would enable us to undertake further projects. The Society's first Research Bulletin was already in preparation [see below]. The Society had been awarded a grant towards the bulletin's production by Cheltenham Arts Council. Alan Gill had collected some 400 photographs of the area; the aim was to publish a selection in the autumn of 2000. Later on, the Society might tackle a short history of Leckhampton Court, from which the Sue Ryder Home could also benefit.

Beyond that, much would depend on the success of members' own research. In the autumn Marilyn West would begin to coordinate work on oral history, in which some members had expressed an interest. Several members had said they were prepared to take part in other research projects. In the event 4 or 5 members are trawling the newspaper indexes for mentions of Leckhampton. [Eric would be contacting others individually this autumn.]

The Society had accumulated a healthy balance in the publications account, but a careful appraisal of the current expenditure had shown that the current level of subscription did not cover room hire, speakers' fees, insurance, incidental expenses and especially the printing and distribution of *Smoke Signal*. A modest increase would therefore be proposed. However, the Committee had dropped any idea of making any other change to the way in which subscriptions will be levied.

Eric paid tribute to the hardworking committee who had supported him during his 3 years as Chairman. Two vacancies had arisen. One resulted from the earlier resignation of Valerie Beddow, for personal reasons. The other was because John Randall felt that after 7 years on the Committee he was due for a break. Three members had agreed to have their names put forward for election to fill these vacancies. In his own case, Eric said that he had enjoyed performing the Chairman's duties, but they had often been a distraction from actually doing some original historical work! Roger Richards had volunteered to fill the breach.

Honorary Treasurer's Report. Tom Hewlett reported a satisfactory financial result. A second ('Working') account had been opened at Lloyds Bank, in addition to the existing 'Book' account, with a reduction in the reserve held at the Chelsea Building Society. The costs of printing *Smoke Signal* had been absorbed into the Working Account rather than, as in previous years, the Book Account. These had gone up by approximately £30, but the issues contained more pages. Speakers' expenses for the year had risen from £88 to £137.

Purchase of books and local publications at a discount would bring in profits to the Society on resale. This year the excess of income over expenditure of £57-92p compared unfavourably with that of the previous year, when it amounted to £237-48p. To maintain our high standards and with the prospect of some increased costs, the Committee had agreed therefore to recommend an increase in subscriptions of £1 per annum with effect from 1st September. This would result in the cost of single membership being raised from £4 to £5 and that for couples from £5-50p to £7-50p. The proposal was approved unanimously by a show of hands.

David Williams was reappointed as Honorary Auditor.

Any Other Business. Roger Richards proposed a vote of thanks to the retiring Chairman, Eric Miller. He said that his would be a hard act to follow, but that Eric would be around as Vice-Chairman and would coordinate research, and edit the new Bulletin and *Smoke Signal*.

Eric Miller thanked John Randall for his dedicated service on the Committee ever since the founding of the Society in 1992. He was presented with a card and book token by the members of the Committee.

The meeting closed at 8-38pm and was followed by a talk on LEGLAG by Don Horwood.

Enclosed with this Newsletter you will find ...

a. Programme card 1999 - 2000, listing the Society's programme of talks and events for the coming season. Please note that (for reasons outside our control) the meetings in September and October fall in the second week of the month, November's in the 3rd week and December's in the first week. In the year 2000 we revert to the third Thursday in the month.

b. Membership Renewal Form. Membership renewals are due on 1 September. Please use the enclosed form and envelope and as soon as possible post or deliver your cheque to the Honorary Treasurer. By arranging for renewals to be paid in this way we aim to avoid overcrowding and delay at the entrance to Church House at the start of the September meeting.

RESEARCH BULLETIN

The Society will soon reach its 'coming of age' with the issue of its first bulletin of research articles. This is now in an advanced state of preparation and should be ready for members (and others) to purchase in October.

By special invitation, John Milner has prepared an article on Liddington Lake - Leckhampton's Pleasure Ground. In addition there will be:

'Leckhampton in a Nutshell' by Eric Miller

Early Flying at Leckhampton by Alan Gill

Leckhampton - 'the Fields Beneath' by Terry Moore-Scott

The Evolution of Leckhampton's Street Names by Amy Woolacott

Some 'Leckhampton Myths' by Eric Miller - Kidnappers Lane; Lillie Langtry and Leckhampton Court; the Mysterious Rails near the Norwood

There will be nearly 50 A4 pages of text and a number of photographs, drawings and maps. The Society is grateful to announce that it has received a grant towards the printing of this bulletin from the Cheltenham Arts Council (see also next item).

ARTS COUNCIL HONOUR FOR SOCIETY MEMBER JOHN MILNER

The Society, supported by its sister societies in Cheltenham and Charlton Kings has recommended John Milner, widely known for his talks on the history of Cheltenham and beyond, for this year's award for services to local history. He is due to receive the award - to be presented, it is hoped, by Richard Baker - at the Town Hall on 21 September. We offer John our warm congratulations. (Last year's award was received by Stephen Blake.)

AVIATION ARCHAEOLOGY

by Cyril Richardson

Intrigued though I am by the tale about the German airman, referred to in *Smoke Signal* No 27, I support the view that the truth may never be known. The crash of a Junkers Ju-88 and that of a Hurricane from RAF Kemble is of course entirely different and relates to an incident which occurred on 25 July 1940. Nevertheless, it has a local connection which readers might be interested in.

On that particular day, a lone Ju-88, laden with two 250kg bombs, was heading for the Brockworth works of the Gloster Aircraft Company, when it was intercepted by a Hawker Hurricane based at Kemble and flown by Pilot Officer Charles Alec Bird. In the ensuing engagement, P/O Bird's aircraft collided with the Ju-88, which crashed at Oakridge near Chalford. Sadly, P/O Bird, aged 23, was killed, as was the Junkers flight engineer.

The other four German crew landed safely by parachute and became prisoners-of-war. During his descent, the observer lost his right flying boot. This item, together with a 'quick release' panel from the Ju-88, reposes in the archives of the Gloucestershire Aviation Collection, along with a photograph of P/O Bird and the flying goggles he is said to have been wearing. He is buried in the churchyard of Adel in Yorkshire and his gravestone bears this inscription :

*He has wings, for as the plane dived deep,
His spirit, free within the realms of space,
On new found wings, flew with a swifter sweep,
Fearless and laughing, to the Throne of Grace.*

The inscription is taken from a poem entitled 'Wings' which P/O Bird and his wife found in a bookshop here in Cheltenham only the day before he met his death. The poem, whose author is identified only by the initials "ACL", is reproduced in John Rennison's book *Wings Over Gloucestershire*.

All these years later, it is a sobering thought that by sacrificing his own life, Charles Alec Bird may well have saved the lives of many of the work force at the Brockworth site, some of whom were residents of the Leckhampton area.

More immediately relevant to our own locality was a fatal mid-air collision over Cheltenham on 11 February 1942 between a De Havilland Tiger Moth flown from the Flying Instructors' School at Staverton and a Miles Master of the Flying Training School, Hullavington. The wreckage of the Tiger Moth came to earth near Parkward Mansions adjacent to the Shurdington Road - Moorend Park Road junction. The collision was witnessed by John Dance, then a member of 537 (Cheltenham Grammar School) Squadron, Air

Training Corps, who watched as the Master dived towards the Tiger Moth, in what he thinks was a mock attack which went horribly wrong.

Having received a direct hit by a German bomb on the night of 11 December 1940, Parkward mansions was again in the forefront of wartime activity. Oh that a photograph of the crash scene would come to light!

References: *Stroud News & Journal*, Feb 7 1985; *Action Stations 5* by Chris Ashworth and *Wings Over Gloucestershire* by John Rennison.

ANOTHER ROYAL CONNECTION WITH LECKHAMPTON

By Brenda Nash

When I was on holiday on the Isle of Wight I visited Osborne House, but the trip included a visit to St Mildred's Church, Whippingham, which is the royal church for Osborne House and was designed by Prince Albert. Our party was shown round by a local guide, who pointed out the very fine reredos and said it was made in Cheltenham.

Two of us in the party live in Cheltenham and when we showed an interest he said he had in his notes an extract from the *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 30 August 1930, which said that the reredos had been a commission from the firm of R L Boulton and Sons and that it had been made by Ambrose H Neale, who lived in Pilford Road, Leckhampton. He was unfortunately killed in a road accident a few years later.

The guide said that the very fine pulpit had also been made by Boulton's and they would very much like to know who the designer and sculptor were. This was much earlier in the 1900s.

I offered to see what I could find out. The only document that appeared to be relevant - available at both the Gloucester Record Office and Cheltenham Library - is a catalogue issued by Boultons in about 1909/10. This has a photograph of that very pulpit as an example of their work, with a caption saying that it was made for Edward VII and other members of the Royal Family as a memorial to Queen Victoria, which would put it at about 1905/6.

Presumably other records have been lost, but if anyone knows about the firm of R L Boulton and Sons and can give any information on this particular pulpit, I am sure the people at St Mildred's church, would be grateful to know.

[Brenda would be happy to pass on any details. Her phone number is 520744. Boulton's were also responsible for the carving of the pulpit in Leckhampton church (out of an oak tree that once grew in a neaby field, it is said); the designer was L W Barnard, who was also responsible for the War Memorial. - Editor]

OUTING TO MALMESBURY

This year's summer outing, to Malmesbury together with our friends from the Charlton Kings LHS, proved as successful and enjoyable as any in the past. During the morning, many of us followed one or other of the historical trails, along the High Street, skirting the town walls or meandering beside the river. There was an above-average choice of eating places for lunch: at least two restaurants offered skate wing on the menu!

Most of us were already familiar with the Abbey ruins and the soaring majesty of that portion of the nave which now serves as the town's parish church, as well as the tale of the 'flying monk'. However, we were later to discover just how extensive that original building had been, when we had a conducted tour of the Abbey House and its gardens, guided by the colourful couple who had recently bought and transformed the property.

The 16th-century house, with its wood-panelled walls and low ceilings, was built upon the remains of the earlier Abbot's House, which we were able to investigate. There was a 'numinous' feel about the locale, which was reinforced by the sight of a pool beside the river below, where a hundred years ago mass baptisms had been celebrated. The building also had some modern features, such as a series of contemporary sculptures. The collection of books in the Library drew envious looks, as did some stylish lamps used to illuminate the map tables there.

The garden left us full of wonder. Several of us bought copies of its geometric plan. Surrounding a series of raised beds set out in concentric circles and planted with herbs was a colonnade to which had been tied clematis, vines and espaliered fruit trees. In the rose garden, which boasted over 2000 different species, we were able to trace the foundations of the original nave of the Abbey and to see the stone grave which had recently featured in the TV programme 'Meet the Ancestors'. Tea in the 'pentice' nicely rounded off a thoroughly rewarding day. Thank you Roger for organising it!

LECKHAMPTON IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR - ANOTHER REVIEW

The Society's recent publication was recently reviewed in the journal of the Regional History Centre of The University of the West of England at Bristol. John Loosley, Bryan Jerrard's successor on the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, comments: *"The editors are to be congratulated on bringing together many personal recollections and documentary sources to provide a valuable and entertaining description of life in Leckhampton in the Second World War. ... This book will appeal to anyone with an interest in life during World War II, not just those in Leckhampton and Cheltenham."*

FROM THE EDITOR

As I take over from **Roger Richards**, who has been editor of *Smoke Signal* over the past five years, it is my turn to thank him on behalf of the Society for his sterling work. I shall do my best to keep up the momentum.

We also thank John Randall for arranging the distribution of this issue of Smoke Signal, as he has done for several years past. This has involved putting the newsletters and any other enclosures into envelopes, which he has previously addressed. Some he has delivered to members who have agreed to see to further distribution, while others he has sent by post. Now that John has left the Committee, the task of maintaining the addresses is being taken over by Tom Lyall.

Copy for the November 1999 issue should be sent to the Editor by the end of October. Members' articles, illustrations and comments are encouraged.

We are still offering earlier back numbers of Smoke Signal to members at 25 pence; recent ones (November 1998 onwards) cost 50 pence. We also have a supply of local books, which are usually available at the monthly meetings.

As always guests 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 Honorary Treasurer, Tom Hewlett (tel: 238617), has the necessary application forms.

The Internet. *Finally, are any members on the Internet? If so, I should be glad to hear from them and suggest a project that might be of general interest and benefit. My e-mail address is 'miller@leckhampton53.freemove.co.uk'.*

Eric Miller

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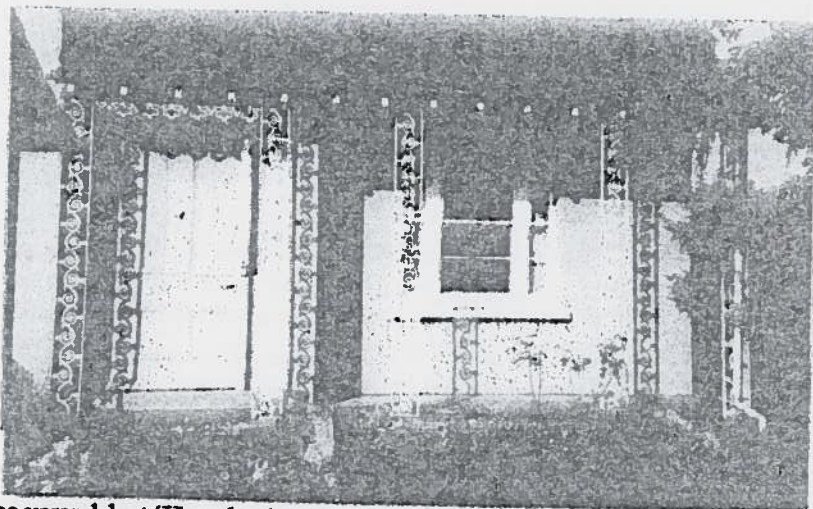
Issued free to members - otherwise 50 pence



smoke signal

No 29, November 1999

Editor: Eric Miller
20 Collum End Rise
Tel: 01242 526461



The verandah at 'Homeland,' the late Jean Bendall's bungalow in Church Road

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LECKHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

In this, the second issue of *Smoke Signal* to be edited by Eric Miller, he has introduced a number of innovations, and I particularly commend the 'Where in Leckhampton?' feature on the back page. In addition he has devoted considerable time and effort to the production of *Research Bulletin* No 1, which itself has been very well received. All the initial printing is already sold out and a second batch has been delivered. I am very grateful to Eric for lightening my load by continuing to carry out several of the functions he previously performed as Chairman, including representing the Society on the Cheltenham Arts Council.

The Committee decided that the December meeting should not take the form of a Christmas party with fun and games, but that we should have a speaker as at other meetings; and who better to make the occasion a special one than John Milner? We also plan to offer some refreshments, so I can confidently look forward to a good attendance ('members only', on this occasion). Don't forget that this will be the last *Tuesday* meeting in the current season.

Our next Members' Evening is not until April, so there is plenty of time for some of you to research and present your favourite aspect of local history. I am sure that the Bendall archive, of which we had a fascinating glimpse last time, will provide the necessary stimulus.

Finally, my very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year (or Millennium) to all our members.

Roger Richards

FUTURE PROGRAMME

During the next quarter the following talks will be given:

Tuesday 7 December (members only) -

John Milner: 'The Park, from Zoo to College'

Thursday 20 January, 2000 - The Revd Brian Torode: 'Tivoli'

Thursday 17 February - Alan Pilbeam: 'The Gloucestershire Way'

It is also proposed to hold a meeting in the Church Cottages, beside St Peter's Church, at 2.30 pm on Thursday 10 February, for anyone interested in participating in a research project.

To celebrate the Millennium, members are invited to join the parishioners of St Peter's church on Sunday, 28 May, for a 'Walking of the Bounds', finishing at the Church Cottages for tea. More details in the next issue.

REPORTS ON PAST MEETINGS

In September we heard a talk on 'The Geology of Leckhampton Hill' by Jo Angseasing, which helped us to understand the backcloth against which Leckhampton's history has been enacted.

At the October Members' Evening there were three main offerings. Terry Moore-Scott told us of his research into Leckhampton's three manorial landholdings, the rôle of the moated site and the connotations of the name 'Broadwell'; Eric Miller brought and spoke about some items from the 'Bendall Archive' (see below); and Peter Whalley described the thatching of Norwood Cottages in Church Road (a mid-16th-century cruck-framed listed building), illustrated by some interesting visual aids.

'The Thatcher' Joan Launchbury was so interested in Peter Whalley's talk that she thought other members might like to be reminded of the list of thatcher's tools, which she remembered from her village of Didbrook, near Toddington. She writes:

The thatcher's tools consisted of a wooden *mallet* for driving in the *spars*, *needles* of various sizes for holding the *yealms* (bundles of straw or reeds) in position and sewing the tarred string in the thatch; a *bow* or reed-holder, which could be hooked on the roof to hold a *yack* or *yoke*, which was a forked wooden implement to carry the yealms to the roof; a *spar hack* for splitting and pointing the hazel rods, which were placed over the straw or reed to hold it in place. An *eaves hook*, *eaves knife*, *side-rake*, knee-pads and ladders were also part of the equipment.

Thatching with long straw gives a combed-hair look, but reed appears close-cropped. Straw thatch is trimmed but reed is worked into position with a tool called a *leggat*, which is a square of wood with nails or grooves and a long handle.

Straw pheasants sometimes adorn the finished work, as at Chipping Campden - the thatcher's trade-mark.

The family of thatchers at Didbrook, named Cresswell - a father and five sons - even thatched the garage and tool shed to advertise their skills.

(Many thanks to Joan for this contribution. Similar short items from other members are encouraged! - Ed.)

At the meeting in November David Lyall gave a comprehensive survey of the development of transport in the region, supported by some splendid slides. Beforehand, Tony Sale generously presented the Society with a copy of his book on *Cheltenham Probate Records 1660 - 1740*. This is of course available for any member to borrow.

JEAN BENDALL and the 'BENDALL ARCHIVE'

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the sudden death of Jean Bendall. She came from a well-known local family, noted as builders, for their public service and for their sporting achievements. Her father, Alfred, who died in 1971 aged 80, had been Chairman of the Leckhampton Parish Council, while her grandfather, John, had been three times Mayor of Cheltenham. John Bendall had built the new junior school in 1906. Jean's maternal grandfather was Barnard Thompson, an early headmaster of Leckhampton Primary School, and she followed in his footsteps as a much-respected teacher there.

Jean had been a loyal supporter of the Society and from her collection of local memorabilia had provided valuable sources for our historical studies. Thanks to Jean's sister Rosemary, the Society has been allowed to care for this archive, to use for its own research or to pass on to local libraries or the County Record Office, as appropriate.

Your Editor has been sifting through the material and has gone some way towards cataloguing it. Briefly, it consists of:

- A metal trunk marked 'Leckhampton Hill Papers', containing original correspondence, legal documents and newspaper cuttings relating to the battle for the right of access to Leckhampton Hill. David Bick had already seen these contents when preparing his book *Old Leckhampton*.
- Photographs of family and local interest. One, showing children outside the school, must date from 1890 if not earlier. Jean's cousin, Arthur, has been most helpful in identifying some of the subjects.
- Various local newspapers containing items of local interest.
- Maps of various dates; one is of unique interest, showing the rough layout of the golf course on the Blackhedge Estate, 1909.
- An assortment of indentures and deeds, some on parchment and dating from the early 19th century. Most relate to land and property which John Bendall had been developing, eg Home Orchard and Trowscoed Lodge.
- Notes and transcripts made by Robert Cary Barnard, the noted 19th-century historian of Leckhampton.
- Various publications, printed matter and ledgers, including the List of Voters for 1832 and the log book of the WWII 'Light Rescue Party' (it is a pity we had not seen this when our book on *Leckhampton in the Second World War* was in preparation).

One set of legal handbooks published in 1831 has been handed over to the Gloucester City Library. Some material, which either duplicates what is already in the Society's possession or is not relevant to Leckhampton and is

not of interest to the Library or Record Office, has been offered to members in return for a contribution to the Sue Ryder Home at Leckhampton Court, a charity of which Jean was a dedicated supporter. As a result, so far, some £85 has been generously donated to that cause.

TROWSCOED LODGE

Among the legal documents are papers relating to the purchase in 1907 of *Home Orchard* (a plot of land to the east of Kidnappers Lane and fronting on to Church Road). John Bendall built two houses on that plot: 'Home Orchard' the red brick house on the corner of Kidnappers Lane, for himself, and 'Homeland,' for his son Alfred and in which Jean lived until her death.

Homeland incorporated features from *Trowscoed Lodge*, such as the verandah shown on the front page of this issue. (Trowscoed Avenue, off Naunton Lane, perpetuates the name today.) Trowscoed Lodge was originally built for the Revd John Griffiths Lloyd, who named it after his former property in South Wales. It was later the Bendall family home until it was demolished after the First World War. By chance, some months ago in the Gloucester Record Office, I came across an advertisement for the sale by auction of Trowscoed Lodge by Messrs Young and Gilling on 16 April 1903 (GRO Ref D4858 2/1/4). Some of the details may be of interest:

The whole property comprises 3 acres approx, about 203 feet to the Leckhampton Road and 605 feet to the side lane, *ripe for immediate development, modern houses of medium size being in great demand in this neighbourhood, and the value will be greatly enhanced by the extension of the Cheltenham and District Light Railway, which is expected to be laid within the next 12 months* [my italics -Ed.].

The glass houses comprise conservatory, vinery and propagating house. The grounds are exceedingly well timbered with trees of mature growth and thickly shrubbed, and laid out in lawns, flower gardens, walks etc. Tennis lawn (with summer house); small orchard ... partly walled-in productive kitchen garden ... second kitchen garden planted with fruit trees. Small paddock with fowl run, tool house, potting shed.

The stabling ... is approached by a separate drive lower down the lane ... comprises 3 stalls and 2 loose boxes. Double coach house. Trap house, wash house, saddle room, WC, loft, etc. Cottage for coachman, with kitchen and 2 bedrooms. Large field in front of house well timbered and thickly shrubbed ... affords effectual seclusion.





Excellent domestic offices in the basement: large kitchen, housekeeper's room, larder, wine and beer cellars, scullery, coal cellar. There is a dumb area along one side of the house.

The property did not reach its reserve price of £2000 and was withdrawn from sale. John Bendall presumably bought it at a later opportunity. In a

letter to Alfred Bendall written in 1918 from Home Orchard, his mother remarked that Trowscoed Lodge was still empty, adding that there were plans to build a church in front of it after the war. (Perhaps a new building for Emmanuel was envisaged at that time.)

THOMAS BENDALL

Jean's great-grandfather, Thomas Bendall, had also been in the building line, as the following trade card shows:


THOMAS BENDALL,
 **Bricklayer and Well-Sinker,**
EDLITA HOUSE,
Anniston Crescent, Bath Road, Cheltenham.

SEWERS, DRAINS, &c., PUT IN.

All kinds of Grates, Furnaces, &c., Set and attended to on the
shortest possible notice.

SAMUEL BENDALL

The first member of the family to come to this area, Samuel Bendall, was a seafarer who had led an adventurous life (as Arthur Bendall informs us). In the early 19th century he was sent to sea from Bristol to serve as a cabin boy on a slave-trader but was captured by the French, who later handed him over to the Royal Navy as a 'recruit'. After numerous adventures, not least taking part in the Battle of Trafalgar, he made his way to Cheltenham, where he settled at Bottle Cottage in Clare Street. He worked with Pearson Thompson, one of Cheltenham's developers, as a well-sinker. He raised a family and was a noted Baptist. He died in Liverpool around 1870. We hope in due course to publish a fuller account of his colourful life

More details of the archive will be provided in future issues of *Smoke Signal* and will be featured in the next *Research Bulletin*. For any members who would be interested in having a closer look at the material, we have booked the Church Cottages (next to St Peter's churchyard) from 2.30 pm on **Thursday 10 February**. This invitation is particularly extended to those members who kindly expressed a willingness to take part in a research project, in answer to the questionnaire which was given out a while ago. The meeting will provide an opportunity to find out what lines of research might be worth following up.

GEOFF CAPPER

Members will be sad to hear of the death of Geoff Capper, on 28 October. Though he had for a long time been living in Bournemouth, he had a great fondness for the place of his birth. He maintained a close interest in the Society's activities and did his best to attend its meetings during his periodic visits to the place of his birth. Many members will recall his spirited rendition of the Naunton Park school song a few years ago.

We were delighted and touched to learn from Geoff's solicitors and executors that he had left the sum of £100 to the Society, as well as some of his memorabilia. The money will be put towards the Society's next publication - a selection from the numerous historic photographs which we have assembled. We are grateful to be able to say that these now include Geoff Capper's family photographs.

RESEARCH BULLETIN No 1

Demand for the Society's first Research Bulletin has exceeded our expectations. The first 160 copies have now all been sold, and we have taken delivery of a further hundred. The range of articles means that there should be something of interest for every member, but make sure to buy a copy soon! The Bulletin is still available to members at the concessionary price of £3.00 - but the offer cannot be extended beyond the end of this year.

RECOMMENDED READING

The Gloucestershire Echo has brought out a splendid illustrated supplement entitled *1900 - 2000, one hundred years of memories*, compiled by Robin Brooks, who will also be known for his videos of Cheltenham. Leckhampton features in the photograph of the ruins of Pilley Bridge (as shown on the cover of *Leckhampton in the Second World War*) and in connection with the Haw Bridge murder. When referring to Denley's Pleasure Garden at Bishop's Cleeve, the writer clearly quotes from the account in *Leckhampton Yesteryear*, describing Leckhampton Sunday School's outing there in 1922.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER LECKHAMPTONS?

Where else is there a place called Leckhampton? It would be surprising if nowhere else in the English-speaking world had been named after our village. But can anyone provide chapter and verse?

WHERE IN LECKHAMPTON IS THIS?



The answer will be printed in the next issue, in which the name of the first member to send the editor the correct answer will also be published. No prizes offered - just the fun of figuring it out!

FROM THE EDITOR

New Members. We welcome the following: Mr J and Mrs S Brasher, Mr I and Mrs A Duesbury, Mrs G Hewlett, Mr R Jones, Miss P J Pearce, Mr D C and Mrs M P Weekes, Mr P Whalley.

As always, guests 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 Honorary Treasurer, Tom Hewlett (tel: 238617), has the necessary application forms.

We are still offering earlier back numbers of *Smoke Signal* to members at 25 pence; more recent ones (November 1998 onwards) cost 50 pence. We also have a supply of local books, which are usually available at the monthly meetings or from the Hon Sec, Amy Woolcott, 15 Arden Road, Leckhampton, Cheltenham, GL53 0HG, Tel 522566

Copy for the February 2000 issue should be sent to the Editor by 31 January. Members' articles, illustrations and comments are always welcome.

Eric Miller

e-mail: 'miller@leckhampton53.freemove.co.uk'

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