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Some Early Inhabitants of Leckhampton

By Eric Miller

We print the following information on some of the early inhabitants of Leckhampton; the first item has not been published previously.

Leckhampton First Priests – Chaplains to the Lord of the Manor?

Leckhampton's first clerk in holy orders was probably a chaplain to the Lord of the Manor. An entry in the *Cartulary of Llantony Priory* (drawn to my attention by Terry Moore-Scott), shows that Simon Despenser, Lord of the Manor in about 1130, certified that 'all those portions of tithes of our demesne of Leckhampton ... which *Audomarus our chaplain* previously held by our gift' were to be granted to the canons of Llantony-by-Gloucester.

This entry for Audomarus predates by some thirty years what had previously been regarded as the first mention of a priest at Leckhampton. In that case, in 1162 a priest named Henry was in dispute with the canons of another religious house, Cirencester Abbey, concerning payment of dues. This dispute was evidently serious enough for him to be summoned before the Archbishop of Canterbury (Thomas à Beckett). Henry was found liable to pay 2 shillings yearly in respect of the chapel; (this was doubtless a simple rectangular building, a few traces of which may still survive).

Leckhampton Girl cured of Paralysis, 1232

The first mention of an ordinary person from Leckhampton - as opposed to a landowner or priest - is of an anonymous girl who was suffering from paralysis and was miraculously cured in the waters of a holy well at Tewkesbury. In the *Annals of the Monastery of Tewkesbury* (edited by H R Luard, 1857) among many miracles for the

year 1232 it is recorded that 'a paralysed girl from Leckhampton received the power of walking and soundness in all her limbs'.

Home Guard Muster, 1608

In 1608 King James ordered a nation-wide inventory of able-bodied men. Twenty-seven were named in Leckhampton ('Leakhampton, whereof Will'm Norwood Esq and John Partridge gent are Lords'). Most were employed on the land and included nine servants, six husbandmen, two labourers and two yeoman. Among the tradesmen were a carpenter, a weaver, a tailor and a tanner. Some Leckhampton surnames will be recognised: Thomas Bellinger ('of middle stature, fit to be a musketeer'), James Byddel, John Crompe, Walter Cherington ('of the tallest stature and fit to be a pikeman') and Michael Pomphrey. There were two 'subsidy men', who paid for a substitute and were excused service. There was also a Thomas Jones, alias Tucker - one of several local examples of this practice at that time; in another context, Glover alias Hasleham crops up more than once, with no obvious explanation. The village was also responsible for supplying munitions: one 'corselet' (jacket of mail) and one 'calyver' (culverin, a small cannon).