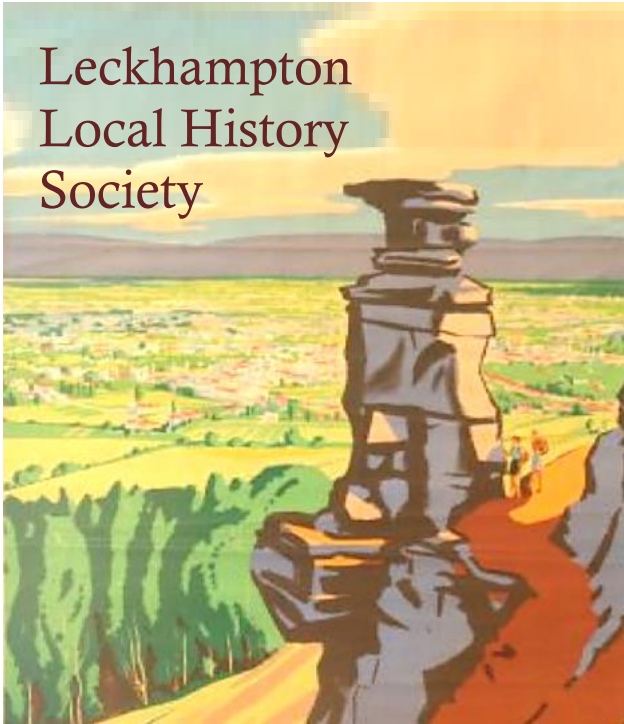


Leckhampton Local History Society



Walk 1

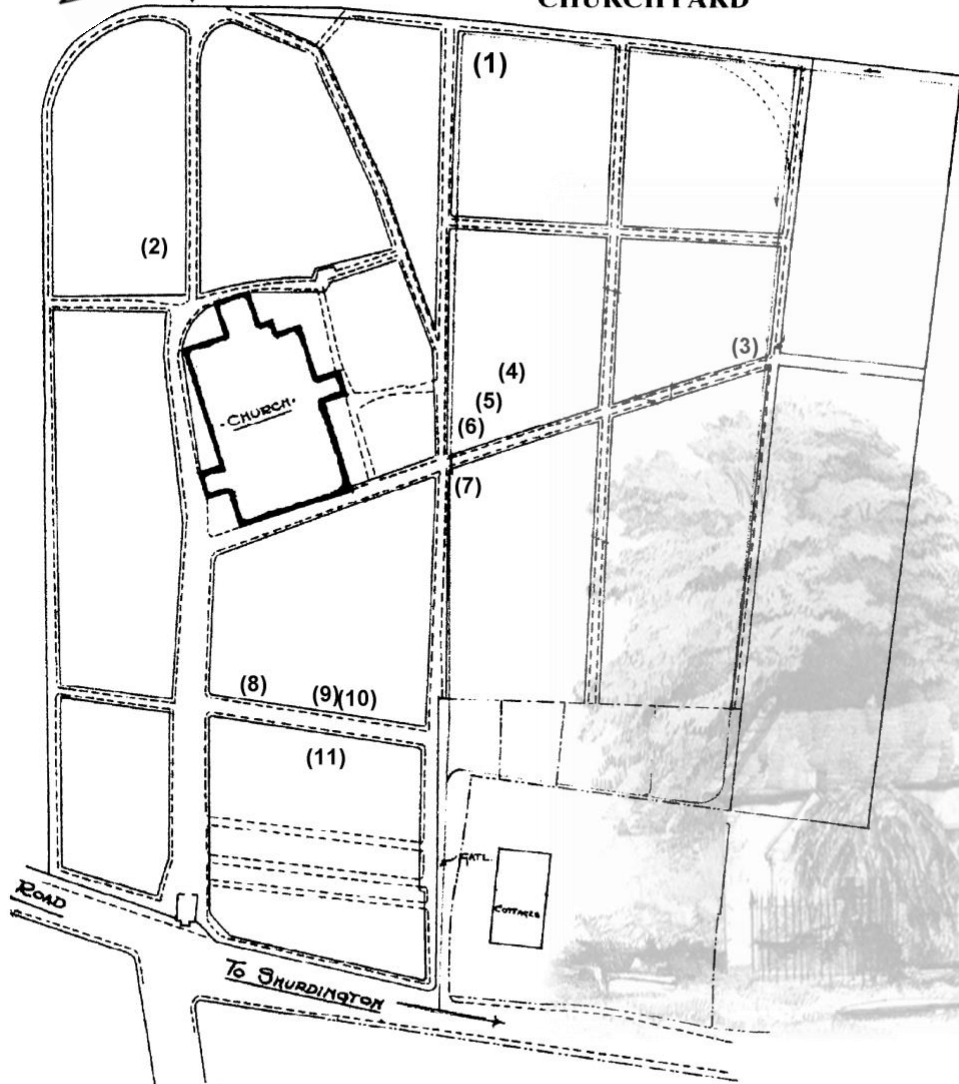
The Church and Churchyard

(approx 1 hour)

1. Starting from the small car park opposite the church (see walk 2 for more detail of this spot), cross the road and enter the churchyard of St. Peter's, Leckhampton, through the old lych gate. The avenue of trees are Limes and mark an ancient route that leads on up towards Leckhampton Hill. Soon you reach the porch of the church. This leaflet will provide some detail, but a wonderful description of the church is to be found in *The History of Leckhampton Church* from which most of these notes are taken.
2. The church you see now dates mainly from the 14th Century with some earlier Norman elements. On either side of the porch, effigies and tombstones from the 14th Century, are likely to be members of the Giffard family, early Lords of the Manor. As you enter the porch, note the bearded carved head to the left of the door, at the base of the arch. This is thought to be John Middleton, the architect who designed the enlargement of the church in 1865.
3. Inside the church, some points to note include:
 - The carved stone effigies in the southwest corner, believed to be of Sir John Giffard, Lord of the Manor (who died around 1330) and his Lady. Sir John built the church in the early 14th Century;
 - The memorials to the Norwood and Trye families in the Lady Chapel, who followed the Giffards, as the lords of the manor;
 - The Norman font;
 - The stained glass windows. Five of these were a gift of Baron de Ferrieres. For a fuller description of the windows, see *St. Peter's Church Leckhampton, The Stained-glass Windows* (2013);
 - The portrait sculpture of William Joseph Gale, set in the north wall.
4. There is much more to see in the church, where a separate guide leaflet is available, so feel free to linger, but when you leave by the porch, turn right. The path you are on, again following a line of Limes, leads towards Leckhampton Court, home to the Giffards, Norwoods and Tryes; but that will wait for another day. For now, refer to the plan on the reverse of your leaflet and you will find out just how diverse and important was the community in and around Leckhampton in years gone by.
5. Standing at the northeast corner of the church, look at the headstones nearby and you will find Richard Purser (2 on the map), then the oldest man in England. Mr. Purser died in 1868, but had been taken by his mother at the age of 4 to see an illumination in honour of the coronation of King George III. That was in 1760, making him 111 years old when he died.
6. Now head up to the gate leading out to the manor and then walk along the back wall until you reach (1) on the map. Here lies John Barnett, *Father of English Opera*. The son of a Prussian jeweller and cousin to the German composer Meyerbeer, he composed many songs and ballads and directed musical farces at the Lyceum in London.
7. Carry on along the back wall of the churchyard and then head down towards the glebe cottages until you reach Edward Wilson's grave (3). Wilson was one of the party of five, including Captain Scott, who perished on their return from the South Pole in 1912. A local boy, he was brought up in The Crippetts. Cheltenham's museum is now named in his honour and you can find many artefacts from his journeys there.
8. This churchyard contains many notable military figures. There are at least 30 generals and 7 admirals, but pride of place goes to three winners of the VC. As you head back along the path towards the church, you will reach a junction where two can be found. William Fraser McDonnell (4) and Major Douglas Reynolds (7). The first is one of only 5 civilians to hold the award and he won it guiding a boatload of troops to safety under incessant fire during the Indian Mutiny, July 1857. The second was for two separate acts of courage during World War 1; the rescue of an artillery piece under heavy fire and singlehandedly silencing an enemy battery (Aug and Sep, 1914). For the third VC see overleaf.



St Peter's Leckhampton CHURCHYARD



Selected names

1. Barnett 2. Purser 3. Wilson 4. McDonnell VC 5. Wyatt 6. Duberly

7. Reynolds VC 8. Smirke 9. De Ferrières 10. Butler 11. Buckley VC

9. Frances (Fanny) Duberly (6). This very famous lady accompanied her husband on military campaigns a number of times, in a way that caused outrage among her contemporaries, but now strikes a note for empowered feminism. She was a close observer at the Charge of the Light Brigade, one of the first to enter Sevastopol and reputedly rode over 3000 miles bringing relief to cantonments during the Indian Mutiny.

10. Walk a little further and you reach two very different memorials. Baron de Ferrieres (9) we already mentioned; a noted philanthropist, Mayor of Cheltenham, Freemason and Liberal MP. To his right, you will find Evangeline Butler. 'Eva' died when only 6, in a tragic fall from a balcony in their home, The Priory in London Road, when running to greet her parents. Her mother, Josephine, was to become one of the Victorian period's greatest campaigners for women's rights, especially prostitutes and other exploited women.

11. To their west, you will find mention of the third VC; Captain Cecil William Buckley, RN. In the Crimean War Captain Buckley volunteered for a commando raid on a Russian controlled beach, setting fire to stores, ammunition dumps and destroying enemy equipment. Five days later, he did it again.

12. Finally, we arrive at Sir Robert Smirke RA. He designed the British Museum, the Royal Mint, the General Post Office and many other imposing public buildings. Locally he designed the Gloucester and Hereford County Halls, the Judge's Lodgings at Gloucester, parts of Cirencester Park, Hardwicke Court and Eastnor Castle!

13. A wealth of information exists about the church and the local history of its surroundings. For more comprehensive coverage, please have a look at the many writings of Eric Miller and others, that can be found referenced from the LLHS web pages.