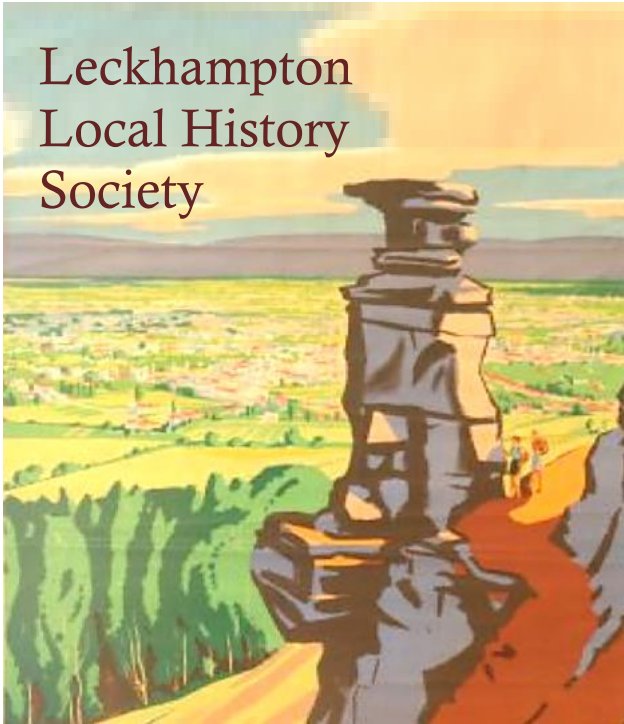


Leckhampton Local History Society



Walk 3

The Lower Hill

(approx 1 hour)

1. Start at the small car park opposite St Peter's Church. Cross the road towards the lych gate. Note the line of Lime trees that leads from the lych gate and on up the hill. You will come upon this again later in the walk but for now turn right, away from the churchyard, and walk past the Church Cottages until you reach a gate into the field.
2. Follow the footpath through the fields towards the hills. You are crossing ancient fields of the old parish of Leckhampton. Our thanks go to Terry Moore-Scott for doing all the original work that produced the map overleaf.

3. Heading on, Broad Marsh turns into Church Meadow. Pass through another stile and you are into The Langett. Skirt around Dog Kennel Grove on your left. Head up through Lower then Upper Gripmore but before you leave the Gripmore, turn around and take in the view. Behind you, Leckhampton Hill marks the southern boundary of the parish. Before you, the parish stretches northwest for some 3 kilometres until you reach the boundary with Cheltenham itself.
4. From the Upper Gripmore, head left into Crow Park. As you can see, every field had its own name, given to it by those who lived by and on this land. Over 200 fieldnames are known for Leckhampton, some dating back to Saxon times.
5. Head for the highest point in Crow Park and a collection of large blocks of local Cotswold stone, cut from the quarries on the hill above you. As you will see from the plaque, these stones are a memorial to *The Continental*, favourite hunter of Cecil Elwes. This is a good spot to sit and rest and possibly have that picnic you carried with you; and an appropriate time to give you some of the history of Leckhampton Court and the families that lived there
6. Leckhampton Court was one of 3 manorial estates in Leckhampton. Only Leckhampton Court survives today. It had been a manor in the Saxon era. A branch of the Despensers were lords of the estate in the Norman period, From the 1300's through to the end of the 1800's, the lords of the manor came from 3 families inter-related by marriage; First the Giffards, then the Norwoods, then the Tryes. More information on these families can be found on the local History Society web pages.
7. The estate was finally sold in 1894 to John Hargreaves from Wigan. Hargreaves had married into the Platt family of Oldham, makers of the world's most popular commercial spinning loom.

Though not from the area, the Hargreaves appeared to settle right into village life. John Hargreaves died in 1900, his daughter Muriel inherited the estate and she married Cecil Elwes in 1901 – they were the grandparents of Sir Henry Elwes, recently lord-lieutenant of the county. Colonel Elwes was a very keen hunter, establishing his own pack at the Court. Which brings us back to *The Continental*, his favourite hunter.

8. Pack up your picnic and continue on downhill through Crow Park until you reach the boundary with the next field, Court Hill. Pause here a while. This is more than just the boundary between two fields. Look downhill towards the court. This is where the Court's Middle Lodge stood and, as you look down, note the way the land is hollowed out along the line that you are looking. This is the line of an ancient hollow way. It continues on down the line of those Lime trees that you started out from and on across Church Road and off towards Gloucester. Look up the hill and you will see that it continues on to Upper Lodge, now known as Tower Lodge. The natural line goes beyond that, on and up to the top of Leckhampton Hill.





9. Your route now swings to the north and downhill. You pass the east gate of Leckhampton Court, then drop down into Long Pilford. At this point, the public path leads straight down into the housing estate. Before you take that route, walk through into the next field to your left. This affords you a wonderful view of the north elevation of the court. As you look at this face of the building, you are looking at a 14th Century

building on the left, a large Tudor cottage on the right with fabulous barley twist chimneys and a Victorian extension bridging between them.

10. If you look around you in this field, you may notice some strangely flat areas. Look more closely. These are the remains from the huts of a German prisoner of war camp that was located in Leckhampton after the Second World War.

11. Return to your original route and follow the public footpath, down through the houses and turn left into Collum End Rise. The estate that you are now walking through is on the site of the old Collum End Farm. This farm was one of the oldest and central to village life. It had been a farm since at least the 1600's and was still a working dairy farm in the 1960's.
12. At the bottom of Collum End Rise, turn to your left into Church Road. You will soon reach Old Lodge on your left. This is the third, and the last of the lodge houses of Leckhampton Court that you will pass today. Built in the early 1800s, the drive of the house you see today was formerly the driveway to the Court, prior to the new access road being built.
13. Carry on along Church Road. The field on your left also has the remains of the POW camp. You may be able to see more foundations and some small stone remains in a fenced area. This is all that remains of an ornamental fountain, built by the German prisoners as the centerpiece of a formal garden.
14. On your right is the Old Rectory. This was until recently the working Rectory of St. Peter's. Built around 1830 by Canon Charles Brandon Trye, the son of another Charles Brandon Trye, who had been Senior Surgeon at Gloucester Infirmary and supported Dr Edward Jenner in his work on smallpox vaccination.
15. This brings us back to where we started, to the Parish Pound.