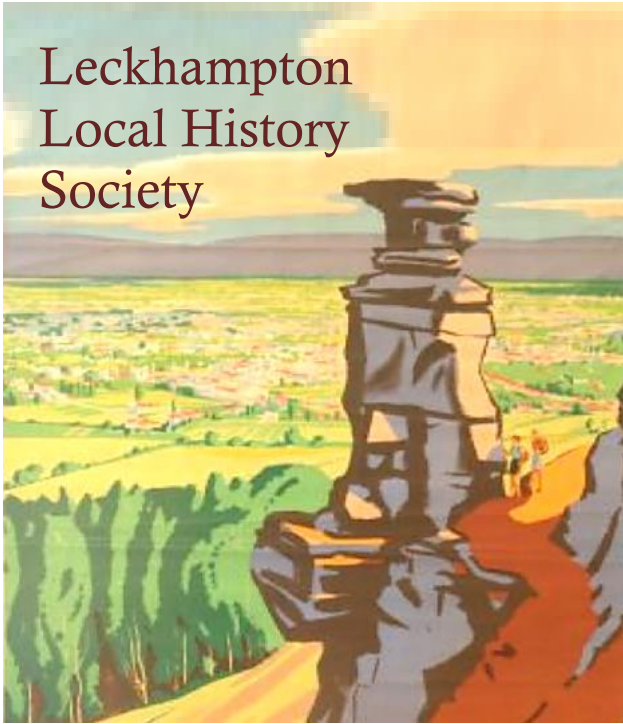


Leckhampton Local History Society



Walk 4 *The Upper Hill*

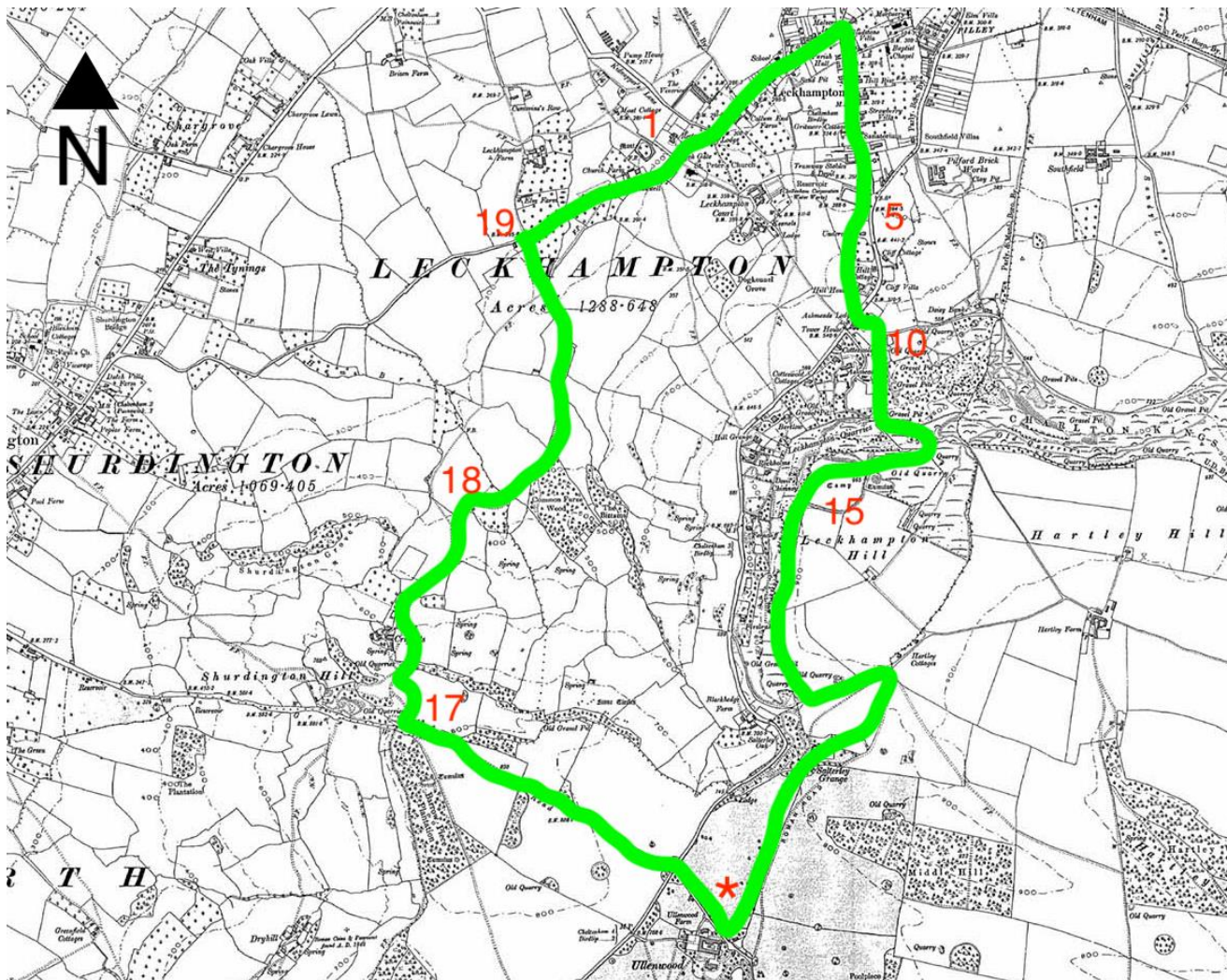
(approx 3 hour, OS map 179, 1:25 000)

1. Pack food & drink and a map for this walk. Start at the car park opposite St Peter's Church. Set off along Church Road, pass the Old Rectory on the left and carry on until you reach the war memorial. Cross Church Road at this point and continue on until you reach the Village Hall.
2. The Village Hall was the first major construction after the sale of the Leckhampton Estate in 1894. Opened in the spring of 1897, it was the initiative of the Rev Clifford Aston. Designed by Henry Prothero (of Prothero & Phillot), the hall was paid for by local donations, large and small.

3. Upon reaching the junction with Leckhampton Road, note the blue plaque on the house opposite. This was formerly the Malvern Inn. The plaque notes a connection with the Leckhampton Stalwarts (more of them later). In fact, it was the Wheatsheaf Inn in the Old Bath Road that was their primary meeting place.
4. Turn right and head up Leckhampton Road. You are now walking along a branch of the Gloucester & Cheltenham Tramroad. Opened in 1811, this horse-drawn line brought coal from Gloucester into the rapidly expanding Georgian town. The Leckhampton branch was constructed to bring limestone from the quarries on the hill above, to be used in constructing Cheltenham's fine buildings. A short section of this track, and the wagons that ran upon it, can be seen near the entrance to Gloucester Docks.
5. Soon you will reach a small estate known as *Leckhampton View*. This was formerly a collection of small industrial units, including at one time a caravan factory, housed in the remains of the tramroad depot. The Gloucester and Cheltenham Tramroad joined the pre-existing quarry tramroads here. The quarry tramroads were first built towards the end of the 18th century. The first tramroad carried stone down an incline to where it met the road higher up the hill. When the plans for the new tramroad from Gloucester were made, Charles Brandon Trye commissioned a series of new tramroads to bring his limestone down a series of inclines (known as a jenny) to meet the new tramroad. You are now standing close to the lower winding drum of the Bottom Jenny.
6. Now follow the track that leads up the hill, through the trees and past the Scout Hut. You are now walking up the course of the bottom incline.
7. On reaching Leckhampton Road once again, you are now at the head of the bottom incline. The

upper winding drum would have stood near here and on twin tracks, descending wagons loaded with stone would have provided the lifting force to bring the empty wagons back up. This incline was connected to inclines further up the hill, allowing for the continuous transfer of wagons and stone from the quarries to the town.

8. Carefully cross Leckhampton Road and enter Daisybank. As you do, look up the road and note the outline of Tower Lodge. This was the upper lodge of Leckhampton Court, the point at which the hollow-way described in *Walk 3* emerges and the scene of a crime linked to the infamous Haw Bridge murder of 1938!
9. Walk along *Daisybank* and turn right through the gate. You are now standing at the bottom of the middle incline. It was also at the heart of the greatest civil unrest ever to be seen in provincial Cheltenham.
10. The story started in 1894 with the sale of the estate. Henry Dale bought the quarries and land surrounding and quickly made clear his intent to bring to an end the centuries long practice of the right of public access. In 1897, he built *Tramway Cottage* for his quarry foreman, just near to where you are standing. This area had long been used at holiday times for public games with coconut shies, skittles and lemonade stalls. Over the years that followed, he fenced off this entire side of the hill.
11. The public had finally had enough. Over the spring and summer of 1902, large crowds gathered and tore down fences in and around *Tramway Cottage*. Afterwards, four ringleaders (now known as the Leckhampton Stalwarts) found themselves in court charged with obstructing the police.
12. This was only the start of the riots on Leckhampton Hill. The four ringleaders were



acquitted for this first foray. On their release, a large crowd gathered outside the Malvern Inn and marched from there to Tramway Cottage and promptly demolished it! This led to a series of legal battles. The cottage was rebuilt and, incredibly, demolished by another mob in 1906. An uneasy stand-off was finally agreed, with right to roam over a small number of paths.

13. In 1929, Cheltenham Council were able to purchase the whole site and guarantee right to

roam for future generations. The Leckhampton Stalwarts were present, happy and vindicated!

14. Follow the footpath uphill. This is the middle incline. On reaching a level area, look around. It's hard to imagine now, but this was a busy industrial site. You are standing at what was known as The Focal Point of intersecting tramroads.
15. Turn to your left and head up the upper incline. Finally, you emerge on top of Leckhampton Common. Turn to your right and follow the path

along to the tremendous view point over Leckhampton and Cheltenham beyond. This is an excellent spot to enjoy that carefully packed lunch! The area you are now standing in was an Iron Age fort dating from the late 6th or early 5th century B.C.

16. Follow the escarpment to the south, passing the Devil's Chimney, and emerge onto Hartley Lane. Turn left and when you reach a house on your left, turn right down a track that was an old Roman Road. Follow this to Ullenwood (marked *). Turn right and walk along the road until you again intersect with Leckhampton Road. Cross very carefully and proceed along Greenway Lane. On your left, you will pass the site of a US Air Force hospital from World War 2.
17. Just after the road crosses the edge of the escarpment, pass through the old iron gate on your right that marks a public footpath. Follow the path down and around the Crippetts, boyhood home to Edward Adrian Wilson of Scott's ill-fated Antarctic expedition. The young 'Ted' Wilson would often be found observing and drawing wildlife in the fields you are now walking through.
18. As you follow the road downhill note the white wrought iron gates, topped by pigeons. These are the gate posts to the first Cheltenham mineral spa, moved here from their original site at Well Walk in the centre of Cheltenham.
19. Turn right at the crossroads at the bottom of the Crippetts, cross the road carefully and follow the footpath on the left. This brings us back to where we started, to the Parish Pound.