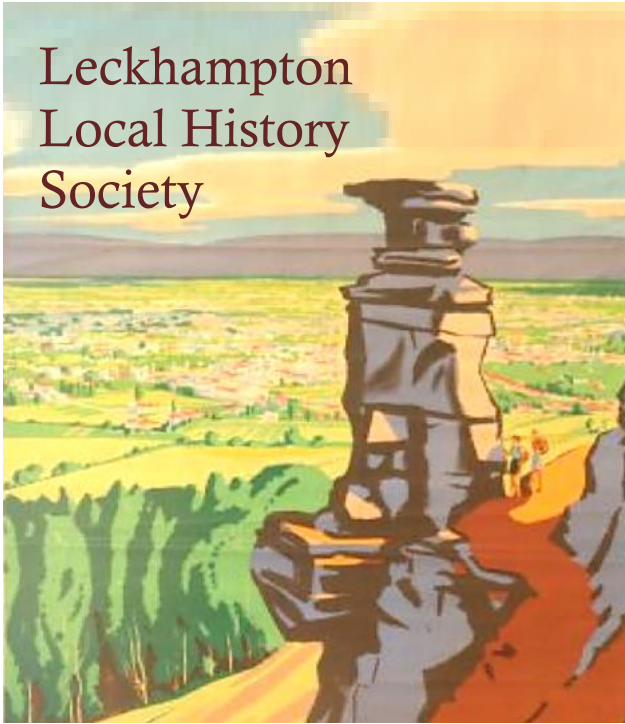


Leckhampton Local History Society



Walk 5

The Farms and Fields

(approx 2 hour, OS map 179, 1:25 000)

1. This walk starts as for Walk 2. From the small car park opposite St Peter's Church (1) follow the footpath away from the road. This ancient thoroughfare was formerly the site of the Parish Pound, where stray cattle would have been kept overnight and, while it appears on early maps, nothing now remains of it. The pound was located exactly where the electricity sub-station now stands.
2. Follow the path, as it narrows, through the gate, and rises up onto the moat of what is now a designated ancient monument (2). This was the site

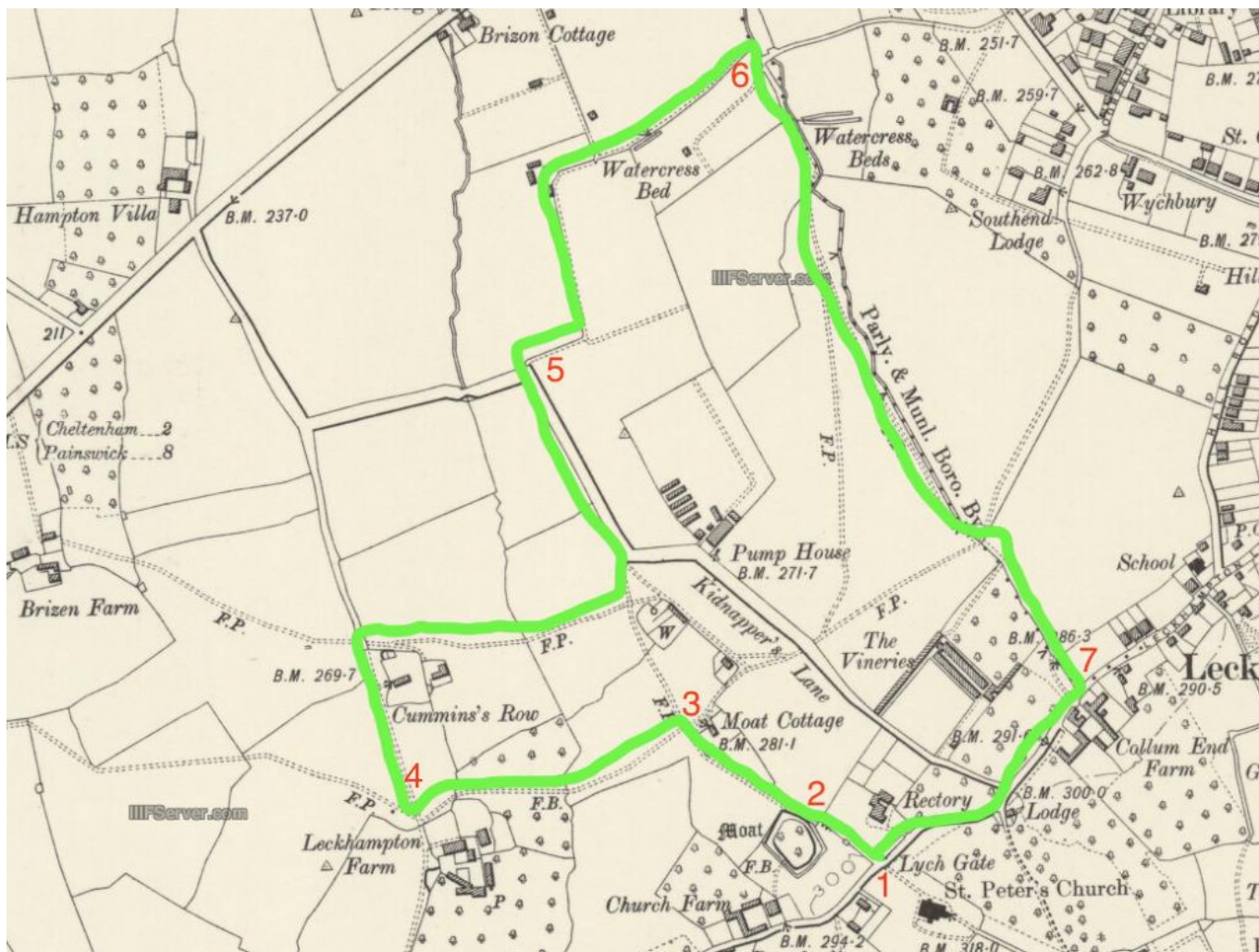
of another manor of Leckhampton. There was a stone and timber building on the island dating from around the 13th/14th century. The crossing was around where you are standing now. Older residents could recall there being ice-skating on the moat! To our right stood one of Leckhampton's early farms known as Manor Farm, or Mr Nurse's Farmhouse, which existed from 17th to mid 19th century.

3. Go through the gate into the next field. You are now in the heart of the oldest part of the village. This meadow was known as House Ground or Moat Ground. If you look back to the hill this is a good spot to see the quarries developed by the Norwood and Trye families. The lower half of the hill below the quarries was occupied by Blackhedge Farm. In the foreground below the hill lies the farmhouse of Church Farm. This 18th century building has been in the Hicks family for well over 100 years and was formerly Leckhampton's dairy.
4. Turning back to our path, just ahead of you lies Moat Cottage (3), the oldest surviving house in Leckhampton. It is of true cruck construction, suggesting 16th century. Walk 2 takes us east towards Kidnappers, but today our path lies to the west. As you pass through the gate, with Moat Cottage to your right, head downhill to your left until you reach a stream with a bridge, this is the Hatherley Brook.
5. Cross the stream and head up into what was once known as the Green Close. Ahead on your left lies our next farmhouse, Berry Farm, also known as Leckhampton Farm. A working farm until the 1950's, the main building dates from 1800, but the barn behind is from the 16th century! A former resident recalls beams in the attic being re-used from ships brought up from Berkeley 'by bullock cart' and date marked from 1625. This was formerly the centre of the second largest estate in Leckhampton, known as Mr Isles Land.

6. Follow the path ahead, keeping the farmhouse to your left. The field on your right will be remembered by many Leckhampton residents as one of the two pig fields. Turn right when you reach Farm Lane (4) and follow the road passing the house on your right. Across Farm Lane to your left lay the fields of Brizen Farm. Turn right and walk past Little Vatch on your right and turn right into the footpath between playing fields. As you follow the path and descend back towards the brook, this was an ancient hollow-way, which led down and across a bridge into the fields beyond.



[Thomas Quick - a watercress farmer]



7. Crossing Hatherley Brook again, you are now in the King's Meadow. Follow the path straight ahead and turn left to join Kidnapper's Lane. Follow the road left to the next corner. Turn right onto a footpath into what was the Middle Fields (5).
8. Keep to the footpath as it turns first to the left (just before the private cottage) and then right. It passes between houses to the left and fields to the right. These fields made up the ancient Middle Field, a common land that preceded the Enclosure Act of 1778.

9. This footpath eventually brings you to the Moorend Stream. Where the path meets the stream was once Dock Meadow, a watercress meadow, where the plant was grown for sale (6).
10. Turn to your right when you reach Moorend Stream and follow the path away from Shurdington Road and back towards Leckhampton. Soon you will emerge out of the trees and into a large open field.
11. The large area you are now entering was another of Leckhampton's ancient open field systems,

known as The Common Meadow. An area of this large field was called The Lotts as strips of the field would have been allocated to peasant farmers by the drawing of 'lots', which is where the current name of Lotts Meadow derives from. This tradition continues today in the nearby allotments adjacent to Burrows Field.

12. Today you will find a few ancient oak trees still standing. These trees would have been well grown long before the field was enclosed.
13. Follow the field edge on the left. You will come to a gate that takes you over the stream. Cross the stream and continue to follow it on the other side. On your left you see aforementioned allotments. This was formerly Sand Field, so-called as it provided the sand used by a number of local brickworks. On your right was the Parsonage Orchard and the Paddocks. The names survive now only in local house names.
14. Follow the path and you come to Church Road (7). In front of you is the timber-framed Collum End Farmhouse (16th century). The last of the farms we will pass today, this is probably the oldest farm in Leckhampton, and central to village life for hundreds of years.
15. Turn right and follow Church Road back towards St Peter's Church. Soon you will return to your starting place by the Old Rectory opposite the lovely lych gate to the church yard (1).