



# Smoke Signal



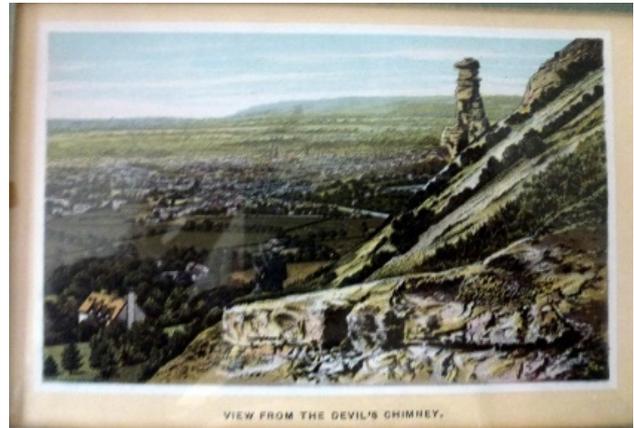
Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council

Leckhampton Local History Society's Newsletter

## Chairman's Message

During Lockdown 2.0 it has been a joy to go for a walk with a friend in the locality as you are not far from a view of Leckhampton Hill and the surrounding ones too. To watch the colours change from orange to brown to the trees having no leaves at all - it seems no time at all since I was taking pictures of the first buds and leaves.

Amy Woolacott decided to resign her post of membership secretary. She has done sterling work for eleven years in that role, having previously been a stalwart in a number of other posts over many years. In addition, she was our representative on the GLHA forum and our deliverer of Smoke Signal. The committee presented her, on behalf of you all, an old print of the Devil's Chimney (pictured above). She was delighted. Thank you Amy from us all!



In the spring we hope to produce a printed collection of the online Smoke Puffs, which members contributed to over the last few months. Please keep them coming! Meanwhile, we have some copies of Bulletin 5 still available to purchase - contact Stephen Gale if you would like one.

Thank you all for your commitment to the society by renewing your membership for the next two years. We have over eighty members and hopefully at some point next year we shall meet again.

I wish you all a Happy Christmas. Stay safe and well.

*Sue Marlow, Chairman*



View from the bridge

## Charlton Kings Railway Station

How many times have you driven or walked over the bridge on the Cirencester Road near the Hilton Hotel (once known as the Lilleybrook Hotel then Cheltenham Park Hotel) without giving a second thought what lay either side of it and underneath? Walking footpaths in the Charlton Kings area of Cheltenham with a friend this morning I was introduced to a footpath which brought me past alongside Station Cottage and Railway Cottage.

Arriving at the Cirencester Road, at the bridge my friend pointed out what must have been the accommodation of the railway workers...station master and porter? Now, of course private homes.

Then I did have time to look over the bridge. On one side is the cutting and path of the old railway and to the other office buildings showing no evidence of the past use of the land. There is a whisper that Lidl have plans to take over the site!

*Continued overleaf*

*(Continued from previous page)* It aroused my curiosity to find out the history of Charlton Kings Station as my mother used to travel from Cheltenham for an outing and funfair at Charlton Kings! She was given a bag of sandwiches and cake all in one. She remembered eating her savoury sandwich with crumbs of a sweet cake! Those of you who remember Canon George Smith, he used to use this station too!

A bit of history... The station opened in 1881. It was part of the section that ran from Bourton-on-the-Water to Cheltenham passing through Leckhampton Station of course! Latterly this was run by GWR. In 1891 the station was served by Midland and South Western Junction Railway which used GWR's Line.

Charlton Kings was a small station with a wooden building. The line through it was particularly busy during the First World War and the Second World War with heavy troop and machinery movements. Traffic declined after the war and it was reduced to a Halt in 1956. The station closed in 1962.

Sue Marlow November 2020

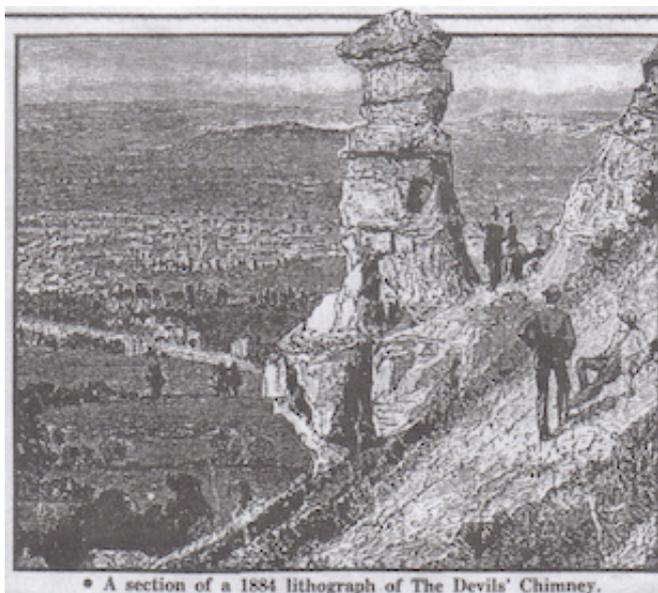
## Devil's Chimney

The Smoke Signal logo is the Devil's Chimney (originated by one of our Society's founders Bruce Stait). The Chimney's appearance today is a result of a face-lift given in 1985, one hundred years after this picture. At that time, it was to be said to be "Cheltenham's most famous landmark" (Cheltenham News #253). No mention of its location on Leckhampton Hill scarp!

The repair work was carried out at the urgent prompting of Cheltenham's Cllr. Wakeley, whose concern was stimulated by an engineer's report that the Chimney's stability was in doubt due to winter frost action. In March 1985 the Chimney was shrouded in scaffolding and work began to stabilise it with thirty to forty foot long steel bolts through the rock, each with a plate fitted at each end. The rock pedestal was given concrete support disguised with a stone facing. The final precaution for the rock's safety was a steel bolt through it from top to bottom. Much of the work was monitored by a supervisory geologist Dr Brian Hawkings.

So, this is the Chimney's "recent" history but what of its origins? There are many books covering Leckhampton's early history. It seems that in the early part of the eighteenth century records and prints indicate that quarrying created an incline, isolating an outcrop of rock, which very soon acquired the name we all know and love.

Amy Woolacott



• A section of a 1884 lithograph of The Devils' Chimney.

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