



# Smoke Signal

Affiliated to Cheltenham Art Council

Leckhampton Local History Society's Newsletter

## Recent Events

**Thursday 16 January:** Aylwin Sampson gave us a selection of his 'Cheltenham Worthies', notable people who had been born in Cheltenham, lived or visited here. Paganini, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Edward Jenner, Sir Ralph Richardson and Cecil Day Lewis were just a few from the panoply of celebrities associated with the town who were illustrated in Aylwin's inimitable drawings. At the end we all felt proud to live in such a distinguished town.

**Thursday 20 February:** A fascinating evening learning about the Leckhampton Waterways from Eric Miller and the Great War memorials of Gloucestershire from Robert Taylor.

**Thursday 20 March:** Eric Miller gave an insightful account of the history of St Peter's Church.

**Thursday 17 April:** Angela Panrucker enlightened us on 'Pub-Signs – Roman Origins to the Present Day'.

## Dates for your Diary

**Thursday 15 May, 8pm Church House:** The LLHS AGM followed by a talk by Dr Nicholas Herbert on 'North Cotswold Villages in the Landscape'.

**Saturday 19 July, St Matthews Church:** An exhibition organized by Cheltenham LHS: 'Cheltenham during the First World War'. At 11.30am there is talk about the Leckhampton Court Red Cross Hospital given by Eric Miller.

**11 – 14 September 2014, Heritage Open Days:** Flyers will be published in due course. Leckhampton Church will be taking part this year, to include a talk by Eric Miller at 2.15pm on Friday 12 September, after which refreshments will be available in the Glebe Cottages.

**LLHS meetings will resume in September as usual on the third Thursday of every month, 8pm at Church House, Painswick Road, Cheltenham.**



## First World War Remembrances

On the Leckhampton War Memorial there are the names of 35 men who lost their lives in the conflict. Taking up a suggestion from the Revd Paul Wilkinson, Veronica Biddle and Heather Cole are attempting to identify the houses in which they had lived, to be marked on a map. The results will be displayed in the Lady Chapel at St Peter's, together with a book of remembrance, in time for a visit to the church by the Bishop of Gloucester on 3 August – coincidentally the eve of the anniversary of the outbreak of war. A quiet ceremony will be held in the chapel on the centenary of the date of each soldier's death, when it is hoped that members of the family might be able to attend.

### Appeal for WWI events database

If you or your local organisation are organising an event to commemorate the centenary of WWI, please let 'Gloucestershire Remembers' know (via their website [www.glosremembers.co.uk](http://www.glosremembers.co.uk)) so that the event can be recorded on their central database.

### Help us save paper!

If you are not already receiving this newsletter by email and would like to do so, please let the Editor know by emailing [julieannsharpe@gmail.com](mailto:julieannsharpe@gmail.com)

# Chairman's Message

First of all I must thank those (twenty) members who responded to the questionnaire, if only to offer encouragement. If you said you were prepared to help, we have taken note and may call upon you at some date in the future.

And yes, there is a future! My doom-laden ultimatum last year has had the desired effect, and we now have more than enough candidates to fill the important vacancies on the committee: Sue Marlow – Chairman, Paul McGowan – Vice-Chairman, Heather Smith – Hon Secretary, David Sharpe – Hon Treasurer, Julie Sharpe – *Smoke Signal* Editor, Sarah McGowan – Programme Organiser, Kate Houston – committee member with responsibility for publicity. Amy Woolacott, who will remain as Membership Secretary, and Lorna Robson who wishes still to be involved, will provide continuity and I will still be available to co-ordinate research activities. While no longer on the committee, Mike Rigby will continue to develop the website. The total is actually more than the eight members that the constitution lays down, but the 'extras' can readily become co-opted.

Some of the names may not be familiar to older members. Sue Marlow was brought up in Leckhampton, where her mother and grandmother took a leading part in local affairs, particularly at St Peter's church, and her father taught at the primary school. It is Sue who encouraged her friend Heather to consider the secretaryship and who introduced me some months ago to Sarah and Paul McGowan and Julie and David Sharpe. Respectively, they live in the Old Rectory and the Old (Lower) Lodge of Leckhampton Court and they take a close interest in the buildings, their history and their setting. Kate Houston is the daughter of long-standing members Douglas and Sheila Houston and belongs to the Leckhampton Players, taking a particular interest in dramatic performances in the village in years past.

Sarah has already planned an original and varied programme for the next year, so prospects are really bright. The only cloud on the horizon is that our current account does not cover all our outgoings. Membership, at one time as high as 120, has fallen to around 80, with a consequent drop in income from subscriptions, which have been unchanged for as long as anyone can remember. David Sharpe has proposed a modest revision in subs and in the donation we ask from visitors, hoping that will encourage them to join!

*Eric Miller*

## WWI Centenary Commemorations

As part of the centenary commemorations from 10am to 4pm on Saturday 19 July, Cheltenham LHS will be holding a Grand Exhibition in St Matthew's Church on "Cheltenham Life 1914 – 1918". There will be numerous displays of photographs and other memorabilia, including one by Geoff and Elaine North on the VAD Hospitals in Cheltenham.

There will also be two talks: one by Robert Opie (founder of the "Pack-age Museum") on "Life and Times of World War I: Home Front" and the other by Eric Miller (at 11 am) on "The VAD Hospital at Leckhampton Court".

## Gloucestershire Remembers WWI

We urge you to visit the Gloucestershire Remembers WWI website at [www.glosremembers.co.uk](http://www.glosremembers.co.uk) which contains details of resources and activities taking place throughout Gloucestershire to remember the Great War.

Run by the Everyman Theatre in partnership with other local history groups, 'Gloucestershire Remembers' has received over £60k in grant funding to support WWI centenary events. There are already numerous activities listed on the website which acts as a central database for events by organisations which have indicated an intention to commemorate WWI in some way. Please do take a look.

## Current Exhibitions

Melissa Webb's World War I Museum, as mentioned in the previous *Smoke Signal*, is still open at the Maxima Forum in Landsdown Road. Do make a point of visiting. It is open on weekday afternoons, 2 – 5pm.



Also described in the last *Smoke Signal* was the silver presentation spade that commemorates the planting of the 'Coronation Oak' at the Parish Hall. This can now be seen in the local history section of Cheltenham Museum (officially 'The Paper Store' at 'The Wilson').



# Leckhampton in 1914

## Part One Spring

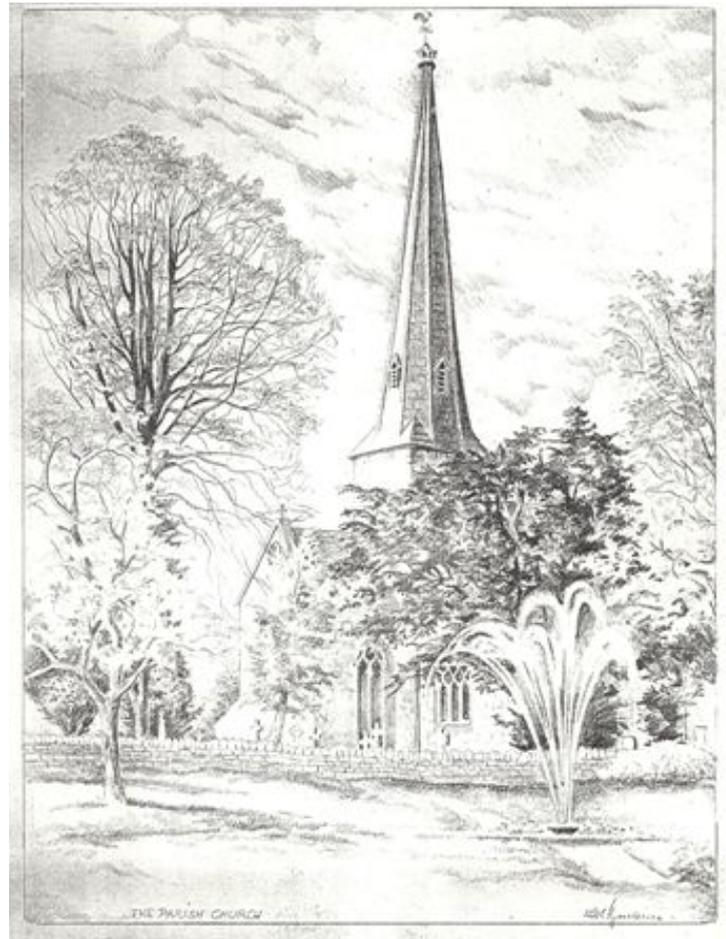
by Paul McGowan

In the spring of 1914, Leckhampton was a quiet outlying village of some 750 homes, increasingly connected to the larger provincial town of Cheltenham. In those 750 homes lived approximately 3 500 villagers, unevenly split as 1500 men and boys and 2000 women and girls. There were 8 farms, 6 pubs, 2 breweries, a post office, 2 grocers and 2 bakers. The occupations listed for the head of household are quite different to today:- 108 are listed as living on their own means - 92 are gardeners - 68 are laborers - 38 are coachmen - 7 are blacksmiths, and - 9 are stonemasons [1].

Articles in *The Looker On*, Cheltenham's society paper, from Spring 1914 give an account of the social scene in Leckhampton and Cheltenham at that time:- a memorial is being erected on the Promenade to commemorate Leckhampton's Edward Wilson who lost his life during the tragic British Polar Expedition of Captain Scott. Thoughts were on the boat race, which Cambridge won by 4½ lengths. Frank Hayes was retiring as Chief Whip of the Cotswold hunt. The College and the Ladies College terms would end for Easter at the end of the first week of April as Good Friday was on the 10th and Easter Monday the 13th. *Brewster's Millions* was on at The Theatre. There was to be a Ladies Invitation Fancy Dress Ball at the Town Hall on the 15th of April.

At a national level, the passing of the Home Rule Act to devolve power to a self-governed Ireland has the country in a state of heightened political tension. Parliament talks of little else and campaigns, sometimes violent, are spreading around the country. Towards the end of April two British army officers carry out the Larne Gun Run, a major gun smuggling operation to equip the Ulster Volunteer Force in their fight against the imposition of Home Rule, which, somewhat ironically, brings 25000 German rifles, and 5 million rounds of ammunition from Germany. The controversial Welsh Church Act to disestablish and disendow the Church of England in Wales was about to be passed - Rev R.A.H Hay during a meeting at St.Phillips and St.James described the proposed Bill as "an outrage to national religion and honesty". At the very end of April, King George V and Queen Mary visit France. Their intent is to promote the *entente cordiale* and cement friendly relations between Britain, France and Russia with the aim of providing a "guarantee of peace" - an important visit in view of the developing arms race across Europe.

*The Cheltenham Chronicle* provides a detailed insight into the running of the parish of St.Peters. The Reverend F. W. Bidwell is the Curate in Charge. At the annual meeting just prior to Easter, they note that they start the year with a fiscal balance of £71 5s and 7d (the difference between the income of £589 19s and 6d and the expenditure of £519 15s and 11d). Thanks are given to the Manor for their support over the year and it is noted with regret that the incumbents Capt and Mrs Elwes and Miss Hargreaves are soon to depart. Thanks are also given to Miss Salisbury for her



*“The Leckhampton team contained some recognisable family names, in a formation that made sense for many years to come”*

excellent organ recitals during the year and a very special thanks to Mr Ballinger who had just notched up 50 years as Church Verger.

In *The Echo*, we read that in Cheltenham League Division II of the Association Football League Leckhampton are about to take on the Baker Street Institute. The Leckhampton team contained some recognisable family names, in a formation that made sense for many years to come:- Yates (goal), Booy, Arley (backs), Rowlands, Lawrence, Cambridge (halves), Stephens, Bendall, Brockes, Fenton, Dean (forwards).

The *Nature Notes* pages of *The Chronicle* describe the spring scene that would have enveloped Leckhampton in 1914 just as it does now in 2014 - “the delight of April days are daintily enfiling the countryside with the brilliance of blossoming orchards and gardens. Hedges are flaming green again, birds are bugling and woodlands are fresh and sweet savored. There is beautiful white rain among the tender leafage of the trees.” In the spring of 1914, no one could foretell what the summer would bring.

*Leckhampton in 1914 is continued in the next edition of <sup>3</sup> Smoke Signal.*

[Note 1: statistics taken from ‘Leckhampton 1894 ‘The End of an Era’ ed. Bruce Stait LLHS 1994].

## Half-day Visit to Charlecote Park

**Tuesday 8 July 2014**

A summer excursion by Charlton Kings and Leckhampton Local History Societies

Our two societies are organising a visit to Charlecote Park, a National Trust property near Warwick.

Charlecote Park has been the home of the Lucy family for over 800 years. The current house was extensively remodeled in the Victorian period by Mary Elizabeth Lucy and is presented today as it was when she was mistress of the house.

We will be traveling on Tuesday 8th July, leaving from Charlton Kings (Budgens, Copt Elm Rd) at 1 p.m. and we expect to return about 6 to 6.30. The price of the coach will be £6 per person and the tour of the house and gardens will be £8.65 (FREE to NT members).



Members wishing to join the visit should contact Edward James, 2 Hayman Close, Cheltenham GL53 9FD, tel 01242-250939, email [edwardjames679@yahoo.com](mailto:edwardjames679@yahoo.com). Cheques should be made out to Charlton Kings Local History Society. Please give name and contact details, including email address if you have one. Please say if you would like to join the coach in Leckhampton and if there are sufficient numbers we will arrange a pick-up point there.

### Contact Us

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### Website

You can keep up to date with LLHS's programme of events, publications, research and more at [www.llhs.org.uk](http://www.llhs.org.uk)

### Forest of Dean Local History Society Local History Afternoon

The Forest of Dean LHS invites you to a local history afternoon based in and around St Briavels, Forest of Dean on Saturday July 12th 2014. From 1.30pm at St Briavels village hall, activity groups will either:

- (a) tour St Briavels 12<sup>th</sup> century castle followed by St Mary's Church;
- (b) tour St Mary's Church followed by the Castle.
- (c) a village walking tour around buildings of historical interest;  
or
- (d) drive to neighbouring Hewelsfield for a talk on the church and the remains of the motte and bailey castle nearby.

Please contact Mary Sullivan, tel: 01594 860197 or email [sullivan469@btinternet.com](mailto:sullivan469@btinternet.com) for an application form. The cost of the afternoon is £8.50 per person. Attendance by pre-booking only.

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