



Smoke Signal

Affiliated to Cheltenham Art Council

Leckhampton Local History Society's Newsletter



A coach fails to negotiate Leckhampton Hill on Easter Monday 1973 and runs backwards into the old Leckhampton General Store. The shopkeeper, Arthur Keen, is holding the 'Cheltenham' sign. Photo taken by Bruce Stait and features in the Society's book 'Leckhampton in Old Photos' on page 61.

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 20 January: Researching Family History in Gloucestershire

John Loosley, former chair of a large network of local history societies, will inspire us with his passion for researching local history.

Wednesday 27 January: Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology

'Pottery and Brickmaking in Leckhampton', an talk by Eric Miller (*see page 3 below*).

Wednesday 17 February: Members' Evening

Wednesday 16 March: Cheltenham Life in the Great War

Neela Mann will chronicle Cheltenham's history during World War 1 and the town's contribution to the war effort.

Light on Leckhampton Chairman's Message

By Sue Marlow

Being chairman has encouraged me read the books I have on Leckhampton. Some of you may have Everard Caudle's book 'Light on Leckhampton'. It has three walks around the locality plus some articles. I have learnt some interesting facts... did you know the shop at the foot of the hill I remember as a child was originally a private chapel before being two shops, a cobblers and a general store. Apparently on Easter Monday in 1973 a coach failed to negotiate the hill, ran backwards down the slope and demolished the pillar box and damaged the side of the shop!

Thank you for following us to the new venue day and time. Much appreciated by the committee as we had to make a quick decision. Many members have said what a good and varied programme has been arranged for this year.

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Rose Hewlett showed us the many stages a village goes through in time. Amazingly I found myself in Frampton on Severn the next day eating lunch at The Bell and sipping coffee outside The Green Shop in the sunshine. It is definitely worth a visit and, as we did not have time to explore fully, I plan to go back soon!

I was back in my childhood exploring Lost Railway Journeys in Gloucestershire. As a child my family often traveled by train. Two journeys I remember are going to Bourton on the Water and changing at Kingham for Oxford, both which featured in David Aldred's talk.

To set the scene for Christmas two lovely ladies in costume gave us a Victorian Village Christmas, in prose, verse and song. It was the first Christmas Carol I have sung this year. The Members' Evening in December will be a quiz about Leckhampton and surrounding area. To help the thoughts there will be mulled wine and mince pies - I look forward to seeing you all there.

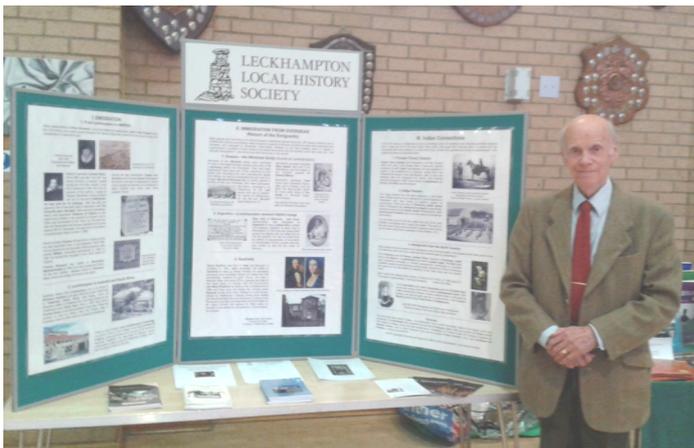


Photo: Eric with the LLHS display at the recent Gloucestershire Local History Day

How well do you know Leckhampton?

On the slopes of Leckhampton Hill you will find a monument to a horse:

- what was its name?
- who was its owner?
- when did it die?

GLHA History Day *and afterwards*

'Immigration and emigration to and from Gloucestershire' was the theme of this year's gathering of local historians held at Pate's Grammar School on Saturday 24 October. It was organised by the Gloucestershire Local History Association, to which LLHS belongs. The many who attended listened to lectures and admired display stands.

Under the heading of 'Emigration' our own display illustrated the role of members of the Norwood family of Leckhampton Court in the colonisation of New England, and buildings which perpetuated Leckhampton's name in other parts. Under 'Immigration' we instanced a number of people with graves or memorials here – the Wishaws who were important traders in St Petersburg, a tragic wife and mother who was buried at sea, a sheep farmer and gold prospector returned from Australia, as well as many connected with the Indian Empire – no fewer than four indigo planters, and Fanny Duberly who not only was with her husband during the Indian Mutiny but witnessed the charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimea. Members will have an opportunity of seeing the display at the meeting in December.

One of the speakers dealt with African immigrants to Cheltenham, as a result of which I was able to put her in touch with a researcher of my acquaintance who is writing a book on the career of Edward Harland Duckworth, a former British administrator in Nigeria. He retired to Leckhampton and arranged for African boys to come to Britain for scientific training. His home was in Moorend Road, with extensive gardens opposite, and Duckworth Close is named after him.

By coincidence, not long afterwards I received an email from a family historian in Australia asking for a photograph and other details of a memorial stone in Leckhampton churchyard, relating to members of the Fletcher family, several of whom had emigrated to Australia in the 19th Century. I was able to supply a photo (taken by one of our members, Kath Boothman). The researcher had originally visited the church's website, but she could equally well have found the information on our own site.

Eric Miller

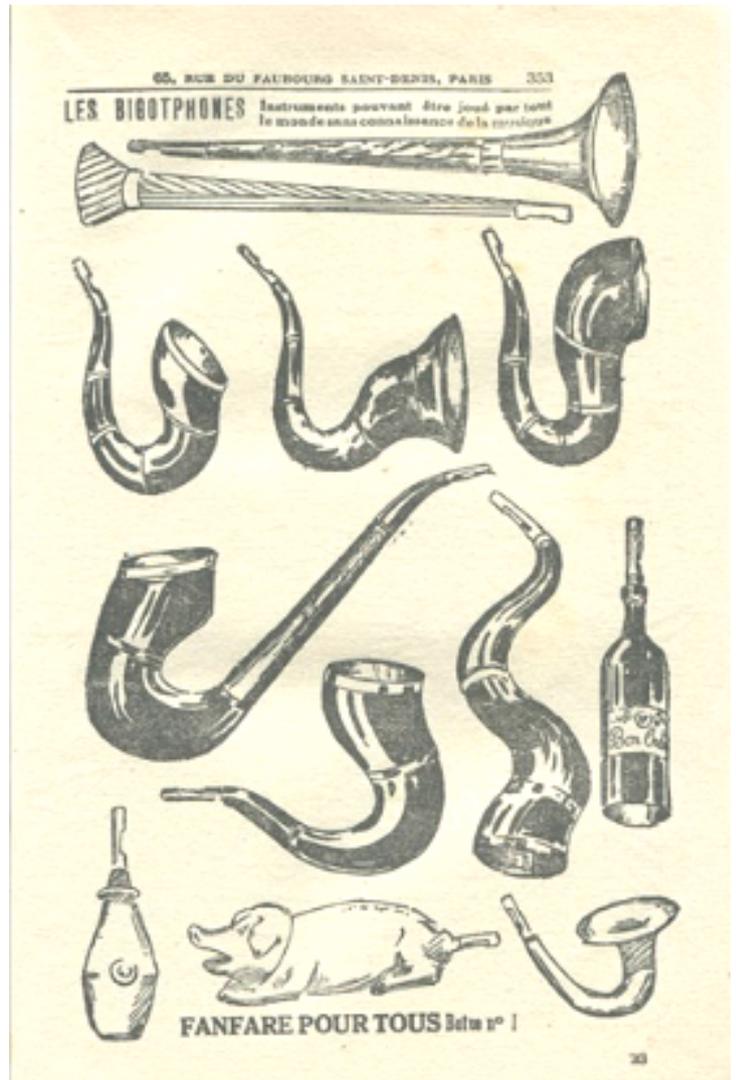
What is a Bigotphone?

The ladies who at our November meeting told us about a Victorian Christmas mentioned a 'bigotphone band'. They described how people would rummage through the house to find everyday objects, including pots and pans, with which to make music of a sort.

A bigotphone itself is like a kazoo, a tube into which one hums, causing a strip of parchment or other thin material to vibrate. It is named after the Frenchman Romain Bigot, who invented the device. It used to be very popular in his country, where bands played bigotphones of varying sizes, some of them quite enormous. Even today, in everyday French parlance, the verb *bigotphoner* is used to mean 'make a telephone call' – 'give someone a buzz', in fact!

I had come across the word before. Anyone possessing a copy of *Yesteryear Leckhampton* (a few copies are still available, price £2.50) will see on page 48 that a bigotphone band as well as a mandolin trio and a ventriloquist performed at a concert given in the newly-built Leckhampton Parish Hall.

Eric Miller



'Pottery and Brickmaking in Leckhampton' – an illustrated talk by Eric Miller for the Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology

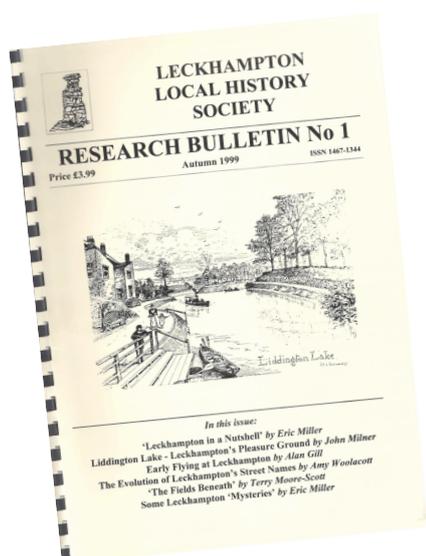


Photo: The Cotswold Potteries in Charlton Lane, 1908

There was a huge demand for bricks during Cheltenham's building boom in the 19th Century. Rich deposits of clay enabled entrepreneurs in Leckhampton to satisfy that need and also to manufacture ornamental and utilitarian pottery.

Scarcely a trace remains of the factories that produced these goods but, thanks to trade directories, newspaper reports, advertisements, maps, census details and serendipitous encounters, Eric Miller has been able to recreate a picture of some of these enterprises and the people who ran them.

The meeting is at Church House, Painswick Road (our own former meeting place) on Wednesday 27 January 2015 at 7.30 pm. Visitors are welcome (LLHS members especially) - cost £1.



Researchers Wanted!

Can you help?

It is good to see a number of new faces at our latest meetings. If any of you have special research interests, do let us know. Or if you would like to find out more about the area, there is material in our own archive which could serve as a starting point. Ideally the findings would be written up in a future Research Bulletin. It is several years since we produced one, and Mike Rigby is willing to be the editor. Potential topics are Leckhampton Sports Club, or Leckhampton's Bye-laws (before it was incorporated into Cheltenham), or extracts from the notebook of Robert Cary Barnard, the great first historian of Leckhampton.

Please do get in touch.

Date Change!

Please amend your diaries and programme cards for 2016 as the meetings for March and May have switched.

Wednesday 16 March: Cheltenham Life in the Great War

Neela Mann will chronicle Cheltenham's history during World War 1 and the town's contribution to the war effort. Neela introduces her book of the same title which is scheduled for publication in March 2016 by The History Press.

Wednesday 18 May: AGM and Cheltenham's Victorian Architecture

Adrian Barlow, current President of the English Association, will open our eyes to Cheltenham's fascinating array of Victorian architecture.



Leckhampton will be 'Village of the Week' on BBC Radio Gloucestershire all this week (commencing 14th Dec). Interviewer, Dominic Cotter, has visited several local residents and their interviews will be interspersed with music and news during the afternoon broadcasts. Please tune in!

Contact Us

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Facebook: Follow us on our new Facebook page by visiting: www.facebook.com/leckhamptonhistory

Website: You can keep up to date with LLHS's programme of events, publications, research and more at www.llhs.org.uk

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