



Smoke Signal

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council

Leckhampton Local History Society's Newsletter

An uncanny coincidence *remembering Cyril Lacey*

Every Remembrance Sunday when the names are read out I give a special thought to H C Lacey. He was not a relation of mine, but when I was teaching at Leckhampton School I did some research into the history of the school, and I found his name in the school log book. He had been one of the teachers at the school.

The headteacher at the time had recorded in the logbook that H C Lacey had been killed in action in 1918 during the Great War. Looking further into the school history I found that my classroom, the one at the front by the road, had also been his classroom. I also found by tracing back through teaching appointments that I had also replaced him in a direct line - with a couple of generations in between.

So imagine my amazement, when I read the memorial book that Eric Miller had placed in church, to find that I had lived in his house. He lived with his parents in Bath Parade. We lived in the same house in Bath Parade when it belonged to my wife's parents. It was one of those 'hair-raising moments'. I listen for his name each year and one day I will go out to the war cemetery in France to find his grave.

David Webber

Cyril Lacey's name lives on

A long-standing member of the Society, now in his 96th year, offers the following contribution:

"Harold Harry Cyril Lacey also has a special meaning for me. He and my father Arthur Richardson, a Grenadier Guardsman, were first cousins. On one occasion when they were both on leave they took a walk on Leckhampton Hill and had a serious talk. Recognising the odds of dying in battle they made a pact that if either of them should ever be killed and the survivor had a son he would name him after the other. It was Cyril Lacey's fate to be both gassed and mortally wounded in April 1918, while Arthur Richardson survived the war, though he bore the scars for the rest of his life. Consequently I sign myself....

.... Cyril George Richardson"



Photo: Harold 'Cyril' Lacey, Leckhampton Primary School teacher who was killed April 1918.

A Glimpse into the Past

As I was saying good-bye to Cyril after obtaining this reminiscence from him he lent me a fascinating book written by a cousin of his mother's. It is entitled *A Cotswold Lad* by Sid Knight. I can thoroughly recommend it to anyone interested in life in the Cotswolds in the early years of the 20th Century. (If you can't find it in a second-hand bookshop, Gloucestershire Libraries hold two copies in their HQ store.) A further nice touch is that in the inside cover of the book Mrs Richardson had written 'A present from Mrs Paterson at Craigside Cottage, 13.7.79'. No doubt that will prompt more recollections from Mary Paterson!

Eric Miller



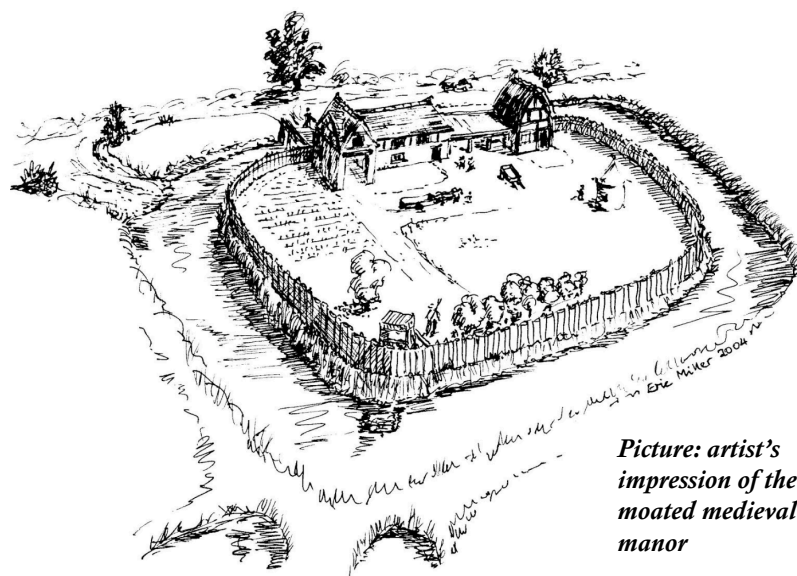
Christmas Quiz – 21st December

We hope that you can join us for our annual Christmas Quiz on Wednesday 21 December at the Glebe Cottages, St Peter's Church. We have a fun filled evening planned with mulled wine and mince pies to add to the Christmas cheer.



Chairman's Message

In November I was asked to look after the newest member of the family. She is a golden Labrador, four months old, called Bea. I just loved taking her across Burrows field and walking (well, running!) to the far seat because of the view of the hill on our return. The colours this year were stunning and it set me wondering what the view would have been like a hundred years ago or more with the busy hill showing the quarrying of the limestone and the hill being a common for people to use especially on high days and holidays.



Picture: artist's impression of the moated medieval manor

A few days before a group of us took Bea out and ended the walk walking around the Moat opposite Leckhampton church - I felt that we were walking through History. In Eric and Alan's book *Leckhampton in Old Photographs* it is described as the location of one of Leckhampton's two medieval manor houses. The excavations in 1933 showed this with an access by a bridge and fortified gateway, and Terry's article about the 2004 geophysical survey is now on the Society's website. Apparently the Moat used to be full of water and older people of the area remember skating on the frozen surface!

I have found our talks this year very informative in different ways and I managed to order Alan Pilbeam's book on Old Gloucestershire Paths. Don't forget the quiz on Dec 21st especially the mulled wine and mincepies to get us all in the mood....

Sue Marlow, Chairman

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 21 December, 7.30pm Glebe Cottages:
LLHS Christmas Quiz

Wednesday 18 January, 7.30pm Glebe Cottages:
Dr. Steven Blake 'Who was John the Muffin Man?' and 'Researching "The Oldman": The Story of Cheltenham Sweeps'

Wednesday 15 February, 7.30pm Glebe Cottages:
Members' Evening.

Wednesday 15 March, 7.30pm Glebe Cottages: Dr. Ray Wilson 'Mills of the River Chelt'.

Tuesday 9 May, 7.30 Glebe Cottages (extra meeting): Sharon Himes - Cavalier's Adventure, the Story of Henry Norwood's voyage to Virginia (see back page)

Beating the Bounds

In his talk in November on Gloucestershire Footpaths Alan Pilbeam mentioned Beating the Bounds. This ceremony used to be regularly performed in Leckhampton and was described in an article in *Smoke Signal* No 11 (1995). Remember that back numbers can be found on the Society's website, if you haven't got your own copy.

Eric Miller

GLHA Local History Day

The annual GLHA Local History Day is on 18 March 2017 at Churchdown Community Centre from 10am to 4 pm.

The theme this year is "Gardens for Food, Fun and Flowers" and will provide a unique opportunity to explore a range of topics relating to gardens in the county. Further details are available at www.gloshistory.org.uk/history-day.php

Fairfield House

searching for a photograph

In Naunton Lane, by the roundabout opposite the school, is a semi-detached house with a fine cut stone end wall. I was told the stone came from Fairfield House which used to stand between Fairfield Avenue and Fairfield Park Road. We could not understand why the builders would transport stone so far when they could have used it in much closer houses

We wanted to see what Fairfield House looked like, it must have been a fine building to have stone like that.

In the 2008 Development Plan it states "...Some notable houses in the area at this time include Fairfield House, Trowscoed Lodge and Ivymead. They were grand villas, sited in large plots, which have since been demolished." Surely there would be a picture somewhere.



Photo: George Ward and his family at Fairfield House. Early 1880s.

We visited the Gloucestershire Archives where we found details of the sale of the house in the early 1900s to two builders, F. E. Jenkins and J. D. Bendall, and a plan of the estate showing a lodge close to where the roundabout now is. This is probably the source of the stone for that end wall.

A visit to the Cheltenham Library Local History section revealed some references to the house but no photographs. I found out a lot about some of the people who had lived in the house. George Ward was the gardener who became butler, who bought the house for ten shillings, the cost of the stamp duty for the sale. George Ward's son married Ada Grace Hall. Other notable people connected with the house were George Harvey who sold the house to George Ward, and Lieutenant Colonel Griffith, a retired Indian Army Officer who rented the house from the Wards.

At a Members' Evening we found the answer we sought. Mike Rigby knew about Fairfield House, its history and its occupants, and where there was a photograph (shown above). We later found, in *Smoke Signal*, a reference to the staircase from Fairfield House being in a house in Church Road. This was the only part of the building we saw, but possibly there are other parts which have been used in local houses.

Mary Oliver and Marion Bloxsome



Peter Smith

Members will recall Peter Smith, a founder member and stalwart supporter of both our Society and the Cheltenham LHS, who died in 2007. His widow Judy has very generously made us a donation of £400, reflecting Peter's feeling of loyalty to the Society. We are hoping to use the donation to fund a new plaque or information board in Leckhampton (further details to follow soon).

Richard Whittington-Egan

Richard Whittington-Egan, an expert on Jack the Ripper and a writer on true crimes, has recently died. You may recognise his name as the author of a book "The Great British Torso Mystery" about the 1938 Haw Bridge murder. This also involved the suicide of the probable culprit, who was living at Tower Lodge, Leckhampton.

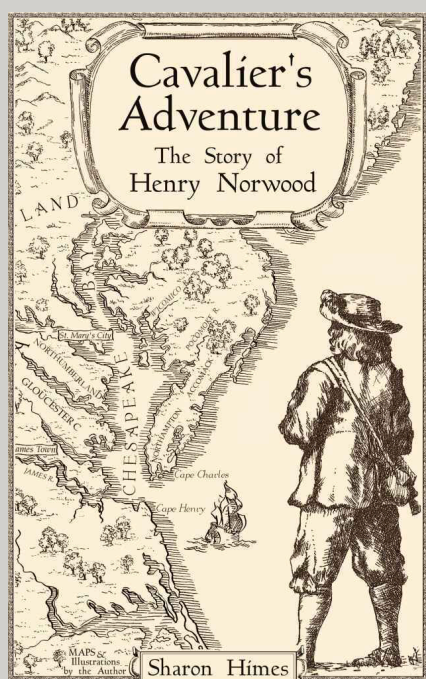
Dowty Cine Club showed a film about the case to the Society in March 2005. A copy of the book can be purchased from Amazon for £5.45 and might make an interesting Christmas present.

The Bayeux Tapestry

Closer to home than you may think

This year is the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings, and several events have been organised to commemorate it. To see the Bayeux Tapestry in France involves a long and roundabout journey from Cheltenham. However, not many people know that there is a faithful copy a mere 75 miles away, in Reading Museum. It was made in 1887 by 35 ladies who were members of the Leek (Staffordshire) Embroidery Society, and after being exhibited in a variety of places here and overseas it was acquired for Reading in 1895. I can thoroughly recommend a visit to see it. You may well have it to yourselves, leaving time to visit the adjacent Town Hall with its magnificent Father Willis organ (sometimes played at lunchtime recitals) and to explore the area beside the canal or wander in the fields beside the Thames.

Eric Miller



'Cavalier's Adventure'

Sharon Himes, an authoress and artist who lives in Maryland, USA, has written a book 'Cavalier's Adventure' about the life of Colonel Henry Norwood when in New England. I have downloaded it on to Kindle for a modest charge and it is a good and easy read. Her website is www.sharonhimes.com.

Colonel Henry Norwood of Leckhampton Court (1614-1689) fought on the Royalist side during the Civil War. After the beheading of Charles I he went to America to help establish the colony of New England, where the exiled King Charles II appointed him Treasurer of Virginia.

Sharon is planning to visit the UK for the first time in early May and is keen to see the places associated with the Norwoods. She has offered to give a talk on Tuesday 9 May 7.30pm at the Glebe Cottages.

Further details about the subject and the speaker will follow in the next edition of Smoke Signal.

Eric Miller

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