



Smoke Signal

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council

Leckhampton Local History Society's Newsletter

The Giffards of Leckhampton

By Eric Miller

Did you know that Giffard Way should be pronounced *Jiffard Way*, with a soft 'G'? I learned this, and much more, thanks to discussion with Sir Sydney Giffard, a descendant of the Giffards who were lords of the manor of Leckhampton in the 14th and 15th centuries. (He is also a distinguished former British Ambassador to Japan.) He travelled recently from his home in Dorset to visit the church and to talk about his ancestor who was responsible for building both the church and the Court, generally believed to have been one Sir John Giffard, who died in about 1330.



As we sat next to the effigies reputed to be of Sir John and his lady, we pored over the family tree trying to identify 'our' Sir John. Several men with that name had lived in the early 14th century, but none of their dates quite fitted. There was John Giffard of Brimpsfield, but he died in 1322: he was executed for attacking King Edward II's retinue when it passed along Ermine Street, near where the Golden Heart inn stands today. Sir Sydney favoured his own direct ancestor Sir John Giffard 'Le Boeuf', whose main residence was at Twyford in Buckinghamshire and who was still alive in 1325 but might well have died just a few years later.

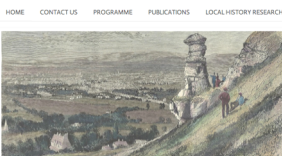
Main photo: Effigies of a 14th-century knight and his lady believed to be of Sir John and Lady Giffard. Inset: Part of Lady Giffard's effigy, showing the carved pin in her headdress.

This discussion has helped my revision of *The History of Leckhampton Church*, now in preparation, as the present edition is almost out of print. The effigies are well known among connoisseurs. For example, a curator from an American museum who is writing a book about medieval armour visited last year and took many photographs. He also drew attention to the carving of a pin in the lady's wimple. You could easily miss it, but next time you are in church have a close look at it.

On a lighter note, in 1280 John Giffard of Brimpsfield was 'empowered to destroy all the wolves in all the royal forests throughout the realm'. I'm not aware of any recent wolf sightings, so he must have been successful, at least in Gloucestershire!

LLHS AGM – 16 May 2018

Leckhampton Local History Society



Notice is enclosed with this edition of Smoke Signal that the Society's annual general meeting will be held on Wednesday 16th May at 7.30pm at the Glebe Cottages next to St Peter's Church. Please do attend if you are able. As usual, we will be electing committee members for the next year, receiving accounts and reviewing the Society's previous and future activities as per the agenda enclosed.

Chairman's Message

As I write this in April, with the colourful blossom telling us all that Spring is on the way, I am reflecting on our busy and varied year. Beginning with Leckhampton and moving through to Gloucestershire, facts came to light which make the landscape much more interesting. Around us is the evidence of the Roman invasion and how the Romans changed our lives. We hope to book the cancelled Jenner talk in a future programme.

The celebration was good fun! The playlet performed at the meeting "Below the Devil's Chimney", written by Eric Miller, is to be recorded and you will be able to borrow the CD. It will also be on our website so watch this space! To celebrate our twenty-five years Radio Gloucestershire interviewed Amy, Eric and me about the society: its history, research and previous meetings interspersed with appropriate songs. If you are not able to listen on April 22nd at 12 noon then there will be a CD you can borrow to catch up on the programme.

To mark the riots and the role of the Wheatsheaf Inn, we are arranging for a plaque to be made and to be displayed outside the pub. There will be a celebration there and an unveiling – we will let members know so you can all attend. A very exciting year!

I look forward to welcoming you to the AGM on May 16th followed by Neela Mann talking about Booze, Balloons and Burials: An Amble Round the Lower High Street. Thank you all for your support during the year.

Sue Marlow, Chairman

The RAF at 100 *celebrating 100 years of the Royal Air Force in Gloucestershire*

Browsing through old Smoke Signals, again, I found a report of a talk in 2007 about WW2 airfields. I was sorry I had missed it but I was not a member then.

Such a talk would be relevant in 2018. It is the 100th anniversary of the founding of the RAF. Previously it had been the Royal Flying Corps.

When I was looking for a picture of Fairfield house I found that Kenneth Eric Ward, grandson of a past owner of the house, had been in the RFC in WW1 and had continued his career in the RAF after the war, retiring as a Group Captain.

For the 100th anniversary, The Royal Air Force Association in Gloucestershire is funding a series of 10 embroidered panels showing aspects of its history throughout the 100 years. There is one panel for each decade, from early airplanes to the Red Arrows, from RAF Police Dogs to barrage balloons, from Horsa gliders to transporting the wounded in WW2. One panel shows all of the military airfields in Gloucestershire, 28 in number, now there are none.

I worked on the last panel in the sequence, the closing parade of RAF Innsworth in 2008.

The panels will be displayed around Gloucestershire, and elsewhere, before going to their final home at the Jet Age Museum.



If you would like to see pictures of all of the panels the RAFA has a website www.rafagloucester.com where there is a link to the tapestries. Click on the Tapestry icon and read the piece about the panels, at the bottom are 2 links to photographs of all of the panels and the ladies working on them.

Mary Oliver

Digging Up History

in The Old Rectory

Whenever I find the time, I love to tackle the garden. Digging has become a very meditative pastime. With each turn of the spade, in an old garden such as this one, some past relic is released from its loamy depths. It's amazing what you unearth, along with the ubiquitous shards of terracotta pots and willow pattern plates, a historical timeline can be revealed. Depending on where I dig, the most common find is past building materials, slate, brick and rusty nails and very thin glass, along with the broken segments of smoking pipes. All giving a glimpse, of an old greenhouse site perhaps?

Good finds are rare; a porcelain doll's head was high on the 'Treasure list'. How it escaped the fork I'm not sure, but it gave a lovely flashback into the past and a child in the garden playing, but then sadly lost and then found by me missing the fabric dress, which I presume rotted. The Toy List grows steadily and is fairly easy to chronologise, most recently a handmade wooden sword with the owner's mark left on it "Wilkinson Sword". A rare lead Cameron Soldier, lead wheels from a toy car or train, plastic counters from Tiddly Winks circa 1970's?, marbles, many marbles.



Photo: 'Treasure' dug up in The Old Rectory garden includes a porcelain doll's head and a rare lead Cameron Soldier

The inventory of lost toys will no doubt be added to by the 3 children we have playing in the garden. It's also easy to see how they come to be in the garden. With the advent of landfills in the 1950s we will not be adding, hopefully anything other than the odd piece of Lego!



Photo: The Old Rectory, built by Revd Charles Brandon Trye circa 1830.

When the current house was constructed in 1830, on the site and foundations of a much older property, there were no refuse collections to speak of. But very little would have been wasted! Bones from the kitchen boiled for stock and then sold to 'The Bone Man', clothes mended, furniture reused. What little waste there was would have had some life for someone. Jumping forward a century whilst digging a large hole for a tree up by the gate a household rubbish pit was unearthed. It gave us an interesting insight into the life of a more modern Priest's household. Refuse from the 1950s, I guessed. Sandwich paste pots, batteries, day to day consumables not so easily removed from the household.

Since the tree, we have dug a pond and found potentially the old air raid shelter from the 1940s; the vegetable patch turned over melted household plastics and twisted unrecognisable alloys - hinges?, Locks?, a Clock? from the 1960s. The herbaceous borders revealed the skeleton of a loved family pet; since respectfully returned.

As yet no hoard or Cromwell Helmet has given up its location. Every dig though always offers up new treasures and with a new metal detector now in hand the search narrows!

by Sarah McGowan

Our 25th Anniversary Celebration

The society celebrated its 25 years on February 21st at St Peter's Cottages. The fifty or so members were entertained by the committee and friends by performing a playlet written by Eric Miller and taken from historical parish magazines. Characters told of events that happened in the 19th and 20th centuries in Leckhampton including the building of the Parish Hall and prisoners of war residing at the Leckhampton Court.



Dr Steven Blake chairman of the Gloucestershire Local History Societies, told of how our society fits in to the larger scheme of things.



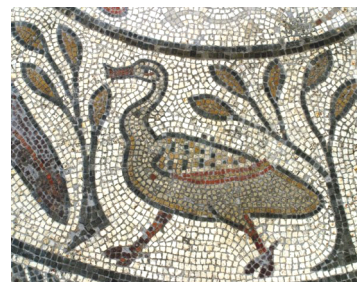
Then it was time to cut the cake. Five members, who were at the first meeting plus Steven Blake, obliged.

A great time was had by all! If you or anyone you know would like to join our Society do contact me, all are welcome!

Sue Marlow, Chairman

Summer Outing to Chedworth Roman Villa and the Corinium Museum Cirencester

On 10 July 2018 our Society, with Charlton Kings Local History Society, will find out what did the Romans do for us with a trip to Chedworth Roman Villa and the Corinium Museum at Cirencester.



In celebration of National Archaeology Week we will be given a guided tour of the best excavated villa in Britain followed by a visit to one of the best collection of Roman artifacts. At each location we will be given a guided tour especially arranged for the group.

This is a full day trip, visiting the Villa in the morning and the Museum in the afternoon, with time for lunch in Cirencester. Further details can be found on the enclosed Booking Form.

Local History Walk 2018

Following on from the success of last year's local history walk around Leckhampton Village, Paul McGowan and Eric Miller will lead another walk this summer. This year's walk will cover St. Peter's Church and the churchyard surrounding it with a focus on some of the eminent Cheltonians buried there.



The walk will start from the Parish Pound car park opposite the church at 14:30 on July 1 (Pettertide). Tea and cakes will be available in the Church Cottages after the walk, which should last around an hour.

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