



# Smoke Signal

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council

Leckhampton Local History Society's Newsletter



Photo: The cast of *The Pied Piper* in 1909. Photograph from the *Cheltenham Looker-on* Courtesy Gloucestershire Libraries

## Leckhampton Pantomimes

In December 1921 Mrs Ada Grace Ward, who was the manager of the Leckhampton Parish Hall (see last issue), applied for a licence for the public performance of stage plays on 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January of the following year. The performances were of *Rumpelstilzkin*, presented by the Leckhampton Panto Company. A notice appeared in the parish magazine stating that tickets could be obtained from the Post Office – reserved seats 2s. 10d., unreserved 1s. 3d. All profits would be passed on to the General Hospital.

The parish magazine later reported that '*Rumpelstilzkin* gladdened the hearts of the folks of Lackington'. Miss Barnard and Mr Delmar-Williamson composed the words and music. The courtiers' dresses were designed by Miss Duckworth and Miss Ivelaw-Chapman, and the poster was designed by Mr Fenning. The same team was responsible for a repeat of *Rumpelstilzkin*, with variations, in 1923.

The first recorded pantomimes in Leckhampton were held before the First World War. In 1909 it was *The Pied Piper*, based on the poem by Robert Browning, and in 1910 *The King of the Golden River* was based on a fairy story written by John Ruskin. The adaptations were by the brother and sister team of Leonard and Christine Barnard and the performers were members of the Church Lads' Brigade and the Girls' Club. Instrumental selections were played by Mr and Miss Salsbury of Sandfield House. In 1911 the title was *The Princess and the Goblins*.

After the war, in December 1919, Christine Barnard wrote that they were hoping to revive *The Pied Piper* with at least some of the original actors. Afterwards the show was said to have been 'splendiferous. We saw one in the neighbouring village (Cheltenham). We almost wept. We shall patronise the Theatre Royal Leckhampton in future.'

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## LLHS AGM – 15 May 2019

Leckhampton Local History Society

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Notice is enclosed with this edition of *Smoke Signal* that the Society's annual general meeting will be held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> 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.

*Continued from front page*

After 1923 there is no further mention of such entertainment until 1948, when the newly-formed Leckhampton Players put on *Dick Whittington*, and they continue to delight audiences to this day.

Some of the names call for comment. **Leonard Barnard** was a noted local architect, designing the war memorial, the pulpit in Leckhampton Church and many local buildings. He was a dedicated officer of the Church Lads' Brigade and had also volunteered to fight in the Boer War. Mr **Delmar-Williamson** was the father of **Lieutenant George Frederick Delmar-Williamson**, who lost his life in July 1918 in a flying accident. **Miss Gladys Duckworth** and **Miss (S) Ivelaw-Chapman** also ran the parish library after the First World War. In about 1955, shortly before her death at the age of 100, the latter's sister Eileen told me that the library was held in the kitchen of the Parish Hall and that it was open one day a week. (This was distinct from the Reading Room in Moorend Road.) **Miss Duckworth** had worked in the kitchen of the Red Cross Hospital at Leckhampton Court and lived at Rosenhoe in Moorend Road; Duckworth Close is named after the family. Members of the **Salsbury** family (NB spelling, without an 'i') were prominent in Cheltenham's musical life. The organ in Leckhampton Church was presented in 1936 in memory of Mrs Salsbury and her daughter Ethel Maria, and the Janet Salsbury Challenge Cup is awarded for folk singing in the Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts. **Sandfield House** is a detached Cotswold stone building in Leckhampton Road just below the junction with Charlton Lane. **G Wilson Fenning** was the headmaster of the primary school. After his retirement he took up a career as a cartoonist. Finally, **Lackington** was an alternative title for the village, which was current until the 1930s. See *Research Bulletin* No 2 for more on that name; also, many of these points are enlarged on in *Leckhampton Yesteryear* (at present out of print, but copies are available from Amazon and Abebooks).

*Eric Miller, Co-ordinator of Research*

## Chairman's Message

What a variety of talks we have had over the year. A Film Night too with popcorn! From looking at stiles with Amy to hearing about Bomber Harris and the part he played in the war. I cannot believe that the year of lectures has nearly come to an end. I was delighted we could arrange an interesting talk by Neela Mann at The Wilson about Cheltenham's official WW1 Memorial Painting.

The committee have decided not to run a trip this year but we have arranged a walk from The Norwood Triangle in July. Also it is lovely to be involved in the life of St Peter's church and we are leading a walk and Eric is giving a talk on the Stained Glass Windows of St Peter's on Tea and Cake Sundays (details overleaf)

I found a small booklet named Leckhampton Hill Walk. It was ten pence and issued through Cheltenham Borough Council. It is beautifully illustrated by Julie Richie showing the diverse wildlife and plants on our lovely hill. Cuckoo Pint, Twayblade and Black Medick to name but three! Plus the variety of butterflies, animals and birds. We are so lucky!

In Everard Caudle's book *Light on Leckhampton* there are three walks around Leckhampton outlined. Did you know there was a shop in Pilley Lane to serve the new estate and Miss Delancey gave money for the building of a hospital for "Fever and other infectious Diseases" in 1866? (More details are given in *Smoke Signal* No 25.) How many of you remember the shop at the foot of the hill? As Chairman I have really enjoyed uncovering little known facts and the stirring of memories of a time gone by as a child. We look forward to our new programme for 2019/20 and to learning more about our beautiful and historic part of the world.

*Sue Marlow, Chairman*



Photo: Delancey Hospital, Leckhampton 1898



# Major John Joseph Forsyth Grant

In St Peter's churchyard there is an unusual tombstone close to the wall bounding the road. It has two logs forming an X embedded in a low granite wall. The inscription reads:

*"In loving memory of John Joseph Forsyth Grant,  
Major 46th Regiment*

*Second son of the late W. Forsyth Grant,  
of Ecclesgrieg, Kincardineshire*

*Born October 23rd 1840. Died April 3rd 1884.*

*Make him to be numbered with thy Saints in Glory everlasting."*

Why the granite and why the crossed logs?

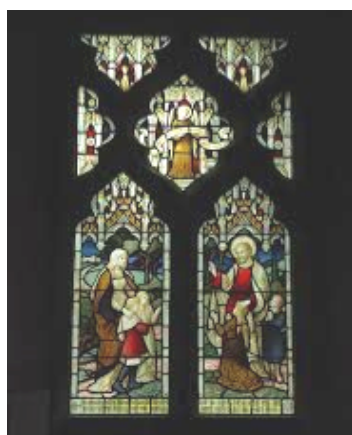
The Forsyth Grants lived in Ecclesgrieg (now known as St. Cyrus) in the 1840s but John Joseph was born in Canada, as were his parents and two older siblings. The two younger ones were born at Ecclesgrieg. The stone at the base of John Joseph's monument may have come from the family estate in Scotland but I cannot find the significance of the logs. The family graves in St. Cyrus are more traditional in design, all low rectangles of stone with a horizontal cross carved on the raised top. Ecclesgrieg Castle was built in the early 1800s, replacing an older house, it is still there, classified as a building at risk. Both of John Joseph's parents are buried at Ecclesgrieg.

John Joseph was an officer in the Duke of Cornwall Light Infantry. He served in Malta, North America, Bermuda and Gibraltar, amongst other places. In 1882 he became ill with dysentery. He was nursed until he was well enough to return to Britain to recuperate. He returned to his regiment several months later but again, in 1883, became ill with dysentery and decided he would have to leave the army. Back in England he stayed with his sister Eweretta Alice Forsyth Grant in Park Place, Cheltenham where he sadly died in 1884, and was buried in Leckhampton churchyard.



In 1876 he had married and had two sons, one born in Bermuda in 1878 and the other in Cornwall in 1880. In 1882 he was granted a divorce from his wife for infidelity with her parents' coachman. He was awarded custody of his sons. Eweretta cared for them after their father's death, at first in Park Place and later in St. Stephen's Road. Eweretta died in 1924 and is also buried somewhere in Leckhampton churchyard. It would be interesting to find her grave and see if it relates in any way to John Joseph's. The burial records give no indication of where it is - please let me know if you have any information.

*Mary Oliver*



## St Peter's Stained Glass

Eric Miller will talk about the stained glass windows of St Peter's Leckhampton on Sunday July 7<sup>th</sup> at 14.30 in the church. Refreshments will be available after the talk in the church cottages.



As part of the Heritage weekends Neela Mann will be giving a talk on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September at 15.00 at The Wheatsheaf about The Riots that took place on Leckhampton Hill. All Welcome!

# Cheltenham Men of Mystery

The AGM of Leckhampton Local History Society will take place on Wednesday May 15<sup>th</sup> at 19.30 in the Church Cottages. A talk on Maskelyne and Cooke: Cheltenham Men of Mystery by Sue Rowbotham will follow the meeting (note: this is a change from that previously advertised).

Many people interested in Cheltenham's history will have heard of John Nevil Maskelyne, the watchmaker from the Lower High Street who exposed the fraudulent American spiritualists known as the Davenport Brothers in Jessop's Gardens, Cheltenham in 1865. However, few know the full story of the man who was famous both as a performer and inventor for more than 50 years, and who was the first of three generations of illusionists to bear the name. Even less is known about George Alfred Cooke, Maskelyne's friend and stage partner for nearly 40 years, who was also born in the Lower High Street. So who were these men and how did their fame come about? Sue will tell the story of Maskelyne and Cooke, and consider their place in the history of both modern magic and of Cheltenham.

*Sue Marlow, Chairman*



Photo: John Nevil Maskelyne

## Leckhampton Local History Walks

*Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June and Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019.*



Please join us for two Summer walks through history in Leckhampton and discover more about the place we live. Why are some Leckhampton roads straight yet others curved?

Sunday afternoon walk 'Farm and Fields' - at **2pm on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June** LLHS will lead a walk meeting at the carpark opposite St Peter's Church, Leckhampton. This will be for around an hour and an half and sturdy shoes are required. Refreshments will be available after the walk at the Church Cottages.

Wednesday evening walk - our second walk is at **7.15pm on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July** starting at the Norwood Triangle, Norwood Road and will last around an hour. Information on places will be given and this will give an insight into the past. Places are limited. Please book with Sue Marlow - 01242 581661



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