



Smoke Signal



Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council

Leckhampton Local History Society's Newsletter



Above: Dr Edward Thomas Wilson, founder of the Cheltenham Museum, subject of our January talk.

New 2021/ 2022 Programme

We've had a really good start to the new programme. Albeit through Zoom, many of you enjoyed Rose Hewlett's talk about 'How to date a village from parish records'. This year, 2021, was a census year and this gave us the inspiration to book Rose. This talk was then the conduit that led us to hear from some of our own committee and membership about their local history projects.

Luckily, we have some excellent speakers, Neela Mann, David Elder, Simon Draper, Dave Abrutat and Alan Pilbeam to round off the Society's year.

For internet users, it is one of the benefits of our current times being able to access these talks from your own house. So we look forward to welcoming you on Zoom on the second Thursday of each month at 7.30pm.

Sarah McGowan, Programme Secretary

Chairman's Message

STOP PRESS

We are all desperate to meet again in person when it is safe to do so in a large enough venue to make everyone feel comfortable.

Since my last message the committee has still been proactive in finding a suitable venue. We have had phone calls, Zoom Meetings and visits to find the right place for our growing membership. At the moment we have decided to have Zoom lectures for the foreseeable future, given the increased uncertainty over possible effects of the Omicron variant. As these are the cold winter months we may decide to go through to at least March in the same format.

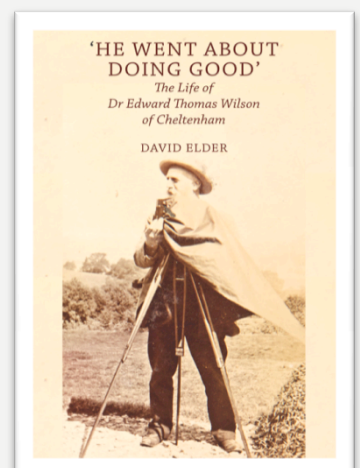
I have enjoyed the variety of lectures that Sarah has put together for us including our own members' evening with the range of topics. We will notify everyone with our plans and hope you will bear with us on our quest!

I would like to thank the committee on your behalf for their hard work in keeping everyone together.

I wish you all a happy and safe Christmas with friends and family.

Sue Marlow, Chairman

"He Went About Doing Good - The Life of Dr Edward Thomas Wilson of Cheltenham" by David Elder. Price £15.95. Copies are currently available from the Suffolk Anthology bookshop (17 Suffolk Parade, Cheltenham GL50 2AE), or direct from the publisher



(see <https://www.hobnobpress.co.uk/>) or author (please email davidelder.net@gmail.com).

Found in the Churchyard: *But what is it?*

At the last Members' Evening Peter talked about his work with the Memorial Tablets in the Churchyard. At the end of his talk he showed some items he had found while tidying around. He did not know what they were and was curious about them.

I recognised one. A friend found a similar object in her garden in the Fairfield area. We could not identify it. It was about the size of a baking potato and looked as if it had had a piece sliced off with a spade, revealing the inside. It reminded me of a Scotch egg with a creamy centre, something wrapped around it and a darker outside skin.

The friend sent a photo of hers to the Finds Liaison Officer at the Bristol Museum with information about the geology of the general area where it was found. He made enquiries and reported back that it is a Concretion, which is a hard solid mass formed by the local accumulation of matter within a mass of sediment.

I take it that sediment had been rolling around and some had gathered together, getting larger and larger. Why there are two distinct colours I do not know, different types of sediment perhaps, or different periods of time. The outside could have been darkened over the centuries by contact with other materials such as soil. Perhaps others have some in their gardens but have never known what they are. It would be interesting to find out how common they are in the Leckhampton area.



By Mary Oliver



Above: Delancey Hospital Small Pox Pavilion (*Gloucestershire Archives*)

Vaccination Appeal (not Covid!)

I came across an entry in the January 1923 Parish Magazine which struck a chord. It said that 'the small-pox epidemic is for the present held in check, but we are warned on good authority to expect a more formidable attack in some months' time'. This was followed by advice to 'get vaccinated – as in the Army', an experience which many ex-servicemen at the time would have known only too well.

This is a reminder that the first part of the Delancey Fever Hospital that was opened by the Bishop of Gloucester in 1874 was the Smallpox Block, fronting on to Pillely Lane. It remained in being until 1935, when it was converted as the laundry, and more recently the block was demolished when Middleton House Retirement Home was built.

In the early 19th century, the well-sinker Samuel Bendall (an ancestor of the late Jean Bendall) lost three of his children to smallpox. His wife's sister was visiting and brought the disease with her and within a few days three of his sons were dead.

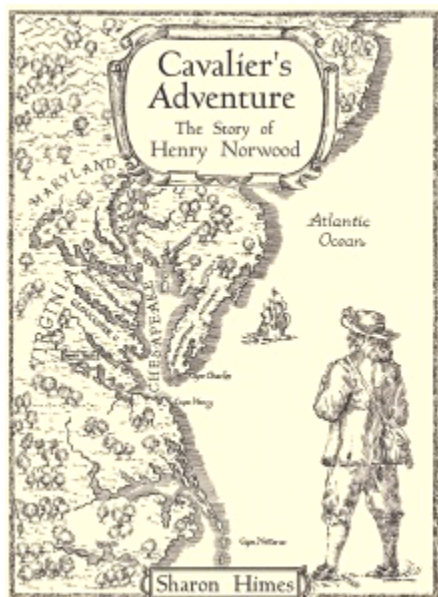
We perhaps forget what an ever-present scourge small pox used to be, and if it didn't kill, it caused disfigurement. Queen Elizabeth the First had caught it and used heavy make-up to disguise the resultant scars. It is thanks to vaccination that smallpox has been eradicated world-wide. We hope that before long, thanks to vaccination and herd immunity, we may be able to say the same of Covid-19.

By Eric Miller

Friends Across the Atlantic

What must be the largest collection of Leckhampton Local History Society publications outside Great Britain is to be found at the home of Nancy Norwood Lambert in Raleigh, North Carolina, USA. Her middle name gives a clue to the reason why. She is a descendant of William 'the Immigrant', as she explains below. Nancy recently took delivery of a consignment of books that included Sharon Himes's account of Colonel Henry Norwood's adventures in Virginia; I was glad to be able to put them in touch with each other. It is a shame that the Covid restrictions prevented Nancy and her husband from visiting Leckhampton this year but we look forward to meeting them in 2022.

Foreword by Eric Miller



When I retired from my arts management job in 2012, family genealogy was not among my planned activities. That soon changed when a cousin from Chicago came to North Carolina to visit some family gravesites, and I realized that I, too, needed to learn more about my ancestors. She gave me a few research tips and I was soon discovering, among other things, family members of whom I had never heard who were buried in nearby cemeteries I had never visited. Why, I wondered, had family conversations not revealed this rich extended heritage? After many years, I have concluded that perhaps even my parents were not aware of much more than their immediate relatives, and I lament every day that I cannot share my discoveries with them now. Thanks in large part to the vast resources on the internet, I have documented both sides of my and my husband's families and provided genealogical information for numerous friends. My database now exceeds 38,000 individuals.

One of the first and most important revelations was my connection to the Norwoods of Leckhampton Court dating back to John Norwood (c. 1486-1509), my 13th great-grandfather and the first Norwood Lord of the Manor. Henry (1773-1797), the last of the Norwood residents was, if my calculations are correct, my 3rd cousin six times removed. In about 1648, John's 4th great-grandson, William ("The Immigrant"), (c. 1623-1703), emigrated to Surry County or the adjacent Isle of Wight County in southeastern Virginia, joining cousins who had preceded him. At least four of his eight children, including my 6th great-grandfather, George, subsequently moved further south into North Carolina.

So it was with much anticipation that my husband and I visited Leckhampton Manor in the fall of 2018 where we were given a grand tour of the house and grounds, followed by a self-guided tour of St. Peter's Church, capped off with lunch at the Norwood Arms. To say that it was an awe-inspiring experience is an understatement. Since then, with Eric Miller's help, we have read many of Leckhampton Local History Society's publications about the manor, the village, and its residents over the years. And we are looking forward to returning in September 2022 for further exploration. In the meantime, I wish to commend the Society for its diligence in researching, preserving and publishing the history of this amazing place which is such an important part of my family heritage.

By Nancy Norwood Lambert, Raleigh, North Carolina

Obituary – Roger Richards

Roger Richards was a founder member of the society and had supported it in a variety of roles. He was editor of *Smoke Signal* from 1997 to 1999 and then took over as chairman till 2002. He also spent many hours in Gloucestershire Archives extracting details from the Leckhampton burial registers from 1914 onwards, a valuable addition to the resources now available on the society's website. He had also been a lay reader at St Peter's, where his funeral was attended by members of his family and old comrades from the Worcestershire Regiment, in which he had held the rank of major. We offer our condolences to Margaret and their family.

Tree Planting in Dog Kennel Wood

The Parish Council have recently set up a climate action group and decided to start making a difference by planting trees funded by the council. On November 13th, with the support of Sue Ryder, they organised the planting of 100 trees in Dog Kennel Wood – to mark the occasion of the international Climate Change Conference, COP26n.

Volunteers, including children, armed with forks and spades met at Midwinter allotments, Gardeners Lane where the Cheltenham Tree Group grow saplings for anyone to collect for a small donation. A selection of 100 saplings were dug up and loaded on to a truck which transported them to Sue Ryder. The collection included silver birch, maples, dogwoods, crab apples and blackthorn.

Sue Ryder garden volunteers joined the group to plant the saplings on land adjoining Dog Kennel Wood where the ground had been marked out by the Sue Ryder head gardener. All the saplings were staked, and tree guards added to prevent deer damage.

The volunteers were then rewarded for their hard work with coffee and croissants before leaving satisfied that more trees will help combat climate change.

Diana Colbeck



Victoria County History – Spotlight on Leckhampton

The Victoria County History is an ambitious programme to record the history of the whole of England. As the name implies, it was begun during Queen Victoria's reign – and it is continuing. Attention has now been directed on to Leckhampton, and during the past few months Dr Louise Ryland-Epton has been doing the relevant research. She needs help, though. One member of the society has already been transcribing wills for her, and there are similar tasks waiting to be done in the Gloucestershire Archives. If this fascinating pursuit appeals to you, please let Sue know. Louise would be on hand to explain the task and offer guidance throughout. The archives are housed in a recently refurbished building in Alvin Street, Gloucester; free car parking is available for volunteers.



NEEDED: Independent Examiner of Accounts

We still need a volunteer to examine the accounts before next year's AGM. It should not be an onerous task; the accounts are kept on an Excel spreadsheet with supporting documents on a hard copy file and (if I say so myself) are always in apple-pie order. If you, or someone you know, would be prepared to take on this once-a-year task, or want to find out more about it, please get in touch with me on leckhamptonlhs@gmail.com or call 01242 526144. Many thanks!

Stephen Gale, Hon Treasurer,
LLHS

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