



Smoke Signal

Issue 96 | September 2022

The newsletter of Leckhampton Local History Society



LLHS on display

In July, the Society hosted a display of its archives in St Peter's Church, drawing a large attendance of members, churchgoers, and the general public.

Find out more on page 5.

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Editor: Matt Youngs

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Chairman's Message: All Change! It's a Tuesday

How lovely it was to meet you all at the AGM in May. It was a bit daunting though to watch myself on camera! After many deliberations and with members' comments about the venue, the committee decided to carry on meeting at St Peter's Church. Because of the bookings of the church, our first meeting is on **Tuesday 6th September at 7.30pm** with Amy Woolacott speaking about "*350 years of dress depicted in monumental brasses*". After that our regular pattern of meetings will continue on the fourth Tuesday of the month. There will be no December meeting. We will hold the AGM in May 2023 and provide an extra meeting in June so there will be nine meetings as usual.

You all have received a "hard copy" Smoke Signal this time (as well as a soft copy) as we have included the programme for 2022-2023 and a membership form. Some of you may have attended Eric's tour of the church and the beginning of July. The archive afternoon was a great success, not only in members attending but other people also came to see what the society had to offer. Some youngsters too! You will be pleased to hear we helped raise over £100 for a local charity by having tea and cake! I hope to meet some of you on the walk on September 3rd (see page 6).



Thank you to Rev Gary Grady for the photos of St Peter's Church.

I look forward to seeing you all at our first meeting at St Peter's on September 6th at 19.30.

Sue Marlow

Chairman

The New Programme

With the new programme nearly here, I am excited to share with you a few of the amazing speakers we have arranged for the year (see overleaf). We start the season with our very own Amy Woolacott who over the years has researched many monumental brasses and we are able to enjoy her research for the night. During October we will hear about trade, industry, and recreation in Leckhampton from Eric Miller, and in November James Rendell will talk to us about H H Martyn & Son. In January Ally McConnell will guide us through another local industrialist's history, Sir Robert Hunt of Dowty's. Caroline Alexander is hoping to join us in April. Caroline's father, Douglas Keen was a very local lad and was well known for developing Ladybird books. Along with a Q&A style members' evening, details to follow, and a walk around 'South Town' with Stuart Manton in June which will replace our December meet, we are happy to present a busy new local history season. Look forward to seeing you!

Sarah McGowan

Leckhampton Local History Society Programme 2022-2023

Tuesday 6th September 2022 7.30pm

“350 years of dress depicted in monumental brasses 1260-1640”

Amy Woolacott

Tuesday 25th October 2022 7.30pm

“Leckhampton – Cheltenham’s workshop and playground”

Eric Miller

Tuesday 29th November 2022 7.30pm

“H. H. Martyn & Son: Gloucestershire’s Fabulous Industrialists”

James Rendell

Tuesday 31st January 2023 7.30pm

"A history of the Dowty Group, using archives from the Dowty collection and Sir George Dowty's memoirs, with a focus on the role of Sir Robert Hunt"

Alexandra McConnell

Tuesday 28th February 2023 7.30pm

Members’ Evening – Question time

Tuesday 25th March 2023 7.30pm

Speaker and topic to be confirmed

Tuesday 25th April 2023 7.30pm

Ladybird Books – Douglas Keen and his life in Leckhampton

Caroline Alexander

Tuesday 30th May 2023 7.30pm

AGM

Paul McGowan

Tuesday 27th June 2023 (PM - start time TBC)

South Town walk through history

Stuart Manton

St. Peter’s Church, Church Road, Leckhampton. GL53 0QJ

Gloucestershire Local History Association Events

This year the Society has excelled itself in displaying aspects of its history at events organised by the Gloucestershire Local History Association, to which many relevant groups throughout the county subscribe.

For GLHA's own biennial Local History Day at the Oxstalls Campus of the University, the theme was the history of education in the county. Those attending could hear lectures on various topics, from going to school in medieval Gloucestershire to girls' education at Stroud Technical High School and at Lydney Park in WWII. Throughout the day people could admire the many displays laid on by member societies. For Leckhampton LHS Anne Gale produced six panels tracing all aspects of education in Leckhampton from early Dame Schools to the new High School, including Leckhampton Primary School and other schools in the area, past and present. The displays were judged, and although it didn't win the prize, Anne's display got honourable mention from the chairman.

St Andrew's Church was the venue for an event on the theme of trade and industry. It was the turn of Cheltenham LHS to host it (Leckhampton LHS did

it some years ago). Paul McGowan and I covered the quarries and the tramroad, agriculture and farming, pottery and brickmaking, coachbuilding and caravan manufacture, and fossil dealing, while Anne Gale supplied information on the laundresses of Leckhampton who provided a vital service to the inhabitants of Cheltenham in the 19th century. (NB. All this and more will be covered in my talk to the Society in October.)

For both events, we were very grateful to the Cheltenham Arts Council for a generous grant towards the production of durable display panels at a large (A1) size. These could be seen again at our archive afternoon in July, and we hope to display them at other venues in future.

Eric Miller

Below: A photograph of LLHS' display at GLHA's Local History Day at the Oxstalls Campus of the University.



Archives Afternoon

During the afternoon of 17th July, the committee displayed a selection of items from the Society's archive. The event was held in St Peter's church and attracted a large attendance of members, churchgoers, and the general public, who were not put off by the oppressive heat and were able to enjoy tea and cakes in the Glebe Cottages afterwards.

Since it was founded thirty years ago the Society has built up an extensive collection of rare and often unique local memorabilia. Founder-members, Bruce Stait, John Randall, David Cox, and Alan Gill were collectors of postcards and photographs. Sadly, they have all passed away, but a legacy is the four-volume portfolio of over 500 images diligently compiled by Alan Gill. These are mostly high-quality copies, and the provenance of each one is listed in a card-index.

Other categories include early maps, details of censuses and voters' lists, directories, sale particulars for the auction of the manorial estate in 1894, scrap books of news reports, manuscript notes, correspondence, logbooks for the Cricket Club, and unpublished outlines of village history. In addition to the Society's own growing output, we showed a number of books about the area. Considerable interest was shown in the A1 display panels that had been prepared over the years on specific topics, such

as Trade and Industry, Education, the Quarries and the Riots, and Parks and Gardens.

Preparing for and setting up the display was a sizeable undertaking, but in view of its success the event is likely to be repeated in the future. Meanwhile, as our regular meetings will take place in the more spacious surroundings of the church, it should be possible to put up the display panels for members to peruse before and after the formal proceedings.

This is an opportunity to remind members that if any of you have photographs or local memorabilia of your own and are wondering what to do with them, the Local History Society would be glad to give them a home. Or if you don't want to part with them, we could scan them for our archive and return them without delay.

Finally, anyone who would like to do further research on any of the items on display is encouraged to get in touch so that we can work out how best to do it. One member has already expressed an interest in the scrapbook of news reports, and the Cricket Club logbooks are crying out for attention!

Eric Miller



Sentimental Journeys

Many citizens of the United States and countries of the Commonwealth who trace their ancestry to the United Kingdom feel the urge to visit their ancestral homes. For members of the Norwood and Trye families Leckhampton is the key attraction. During July there have been two such sentimental journeys, and a further one is expected at the end of August.

The first visitors were Simon Meredith and his brother Martin, descendants of the Reverend Charles Brandon Trye's daughter Jane Eleanor, who had married Richard Treffry Meredith (see *Research Bulletin* 5, page 30). They had grown up in this country but emigrated as young men. They were especially moved when they looked round the Old Rectory, and they also saw the Trye memorials in the church and visited the Court. I also showed them the site of The Grotto, where their great-great-grandmother had once lived (again, see *Bulletin* 5). The Reverend Gary Grady joined us in the church, finding common ground in the finer points of baseball. As a matter of interest, Simon used to manage a sports centre in Chicago, which is fitting for a visitor to Leek-hampton, since Chicago in the native American language means 'Onion fields'.

Virginia Carson, a native of Georgia, is descended from William Norwood, who emigrated in 1615,

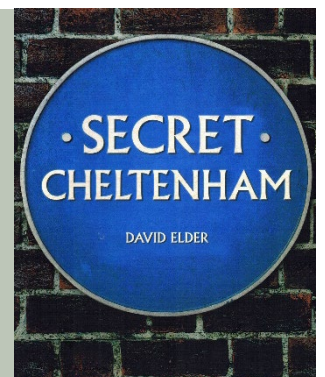
married in America and fathered eight children. She had first visited Leckhampton with her mother in 1963 and was eager to refresh her memories. Her mother, a historian and genealogist herself, had been a friend of Marian Norwood Callam, the author of the authoritative history of the Norwood family (there is a copy in the Cheltenham Local Studies Centre). The Giffard effigies and the Norwood brass and other Norwood memorials commanded Virginia's attention, and she also enjoyed a lively conversation with the Reverend Gary Grady. After a tour of the Court, the visit culminated in a visit to The Wilson, where she admired the portrait of her ancestor the first William Norwood, who had been Lord of the Manor of Cheltenham as well as Leckhampton. I photographed her proudly standing beside it.

William Norwood, senior, had married Elizabeth Lygon of Madresfield. Next year members of the Lygon Family and Kinsman Association will be attending a grand reunion at Malvern. That includes a number of Virginia's family, and we expect to welcome them on a side visit here.

Eric Miller

Secret Cheltenham Walk

On **Saturday 3rd September at 11am**, local historian and author David Elder will be giving a guided walk entitled "*Secret Cheltenham*", exploring unusual, quirky, and less familiar aspects of the town's history. The walk starts and finishes outside the Wilson Museum in Clarence Street and lasts approximately 75 minutes. Numbers are limited to just 15 people so please **book your place** by emailing leckhamptonlhs@gmail.com or call Sue Marlow on 01242 581661. David will be doing a similar walk for the Cheltenham Heritage Open Days (which get booked up very quickly) but the 3rd September walk is a free bonus event exclusively for LLHS members!



Members' Research Requests

Mrs Godwin is investigating a family experience which occurred during a bombing raid in 1940, specifically in the area of Pilley Crescent, Church Road and Leckhampton Primary School. If anybody has first-hand witness accounts, old photographs, newspapers cuttings, old school diaries, or personal diaries they could share it would be very helpful. Also, any information regarding the Leckhampton Police during WW2, any police incident records, diaries, old photographs, etc. If you can help, please get in touch via leckhamptonlhs@gmail.com or contact any Committee Member.

If you have a research request that you would like to go out to Smoke Signal readers, please let us know.

A Walking Tour of Mitcheldean

A small group of Leckhampton History society joined up with twenty-five members of the Forest of Dean society to have a guided walk around the historic village of Mitcheldean on Sunday 3rd July 2022. We met at the car park in the village centre early afternoon and were introduced to our two guides Ian and Andrew. We split into two groups and our group were guided to the top end of the village first and visited the beautiful medieval church of St Michael and All Angels. The site of the church is at the junction of two ancient roads of the Roman period. We carried on with our walk past the historic Elizabethan barn, Platt Row and the old bakehouse which has been converted to a house. The old ovens were still visible but not in use. The village has narrow streets and old timber framed houses. It was once known as Dene Magna and iron, cloth and leather were produced there.

We stopped for refreshments at the house of one of our guides and were treated to delicious homemade cake and tea in a beautiful garden in the sunshine.

We then changed to the other guide and were taken to the lower part of the village and were told about Rank Xerox which employed over 5,000 people in the late 20th century but has now closed and is now a large business park. On the outskirts of the village is an area called Plump Hill which has a nature reserve and is ideal for birdwatching and wildlife spotting.

If you would like to find out more about this area visit the Forest of Dean and Wye valley website (visitdeanwye.co.uk)

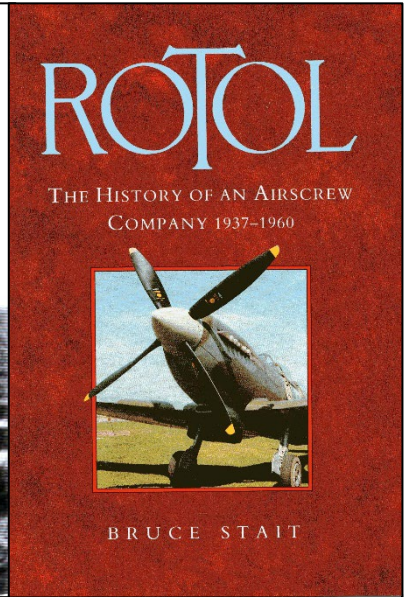
Lorry Butler

Below: Members of the Forest of Dean and Leckhampton Local History Societies smile for the camera after an excellent tea!



Card and Contactless Payments

Following feedback from members and visitors, we can now accept card and contactless payments at meetings and events. Our system supports all major credit and debit cards, Google Pay and Apple Pay. Cash and cheques are still welcome too, of course!



Images (clockwise from top left): The Potteries in Charlton Lane, 1908; Fly jacket of a book written by the Society's founder; "The Norwood Brass" in Leckhampton Church, showing the Tudor dress (rubbing by Amy Woolacott).

Leckhampton Local History Society

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council