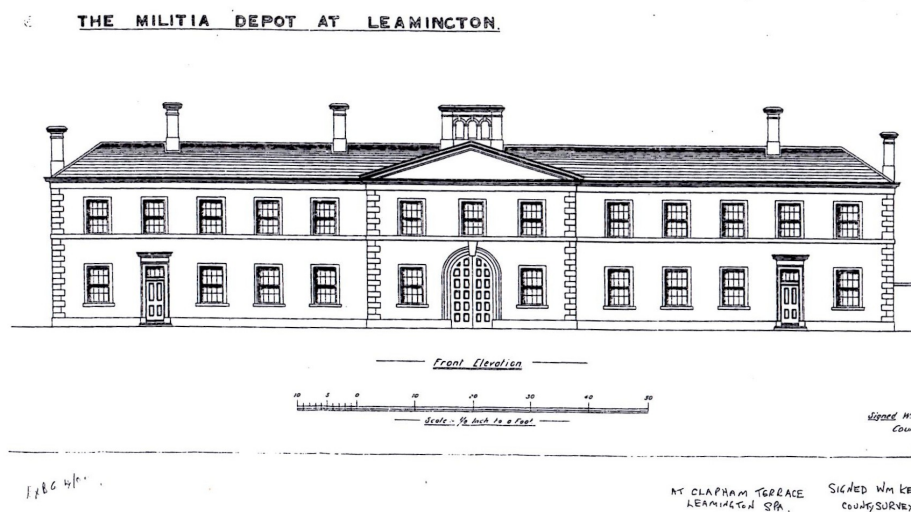


The Leamington Omnibus

Newsletter of the Leamington History Group

Summer 2013

The Barracks of the 2nd Warwickshire Militia, Barrack Road, (now Clapham Terrace), Leamington Spa



With the exception of the years of the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny Campaigns, the 2nd Warwickshire Militia were trained and billeted in the town from 1853 until the erection of Budbrooke Barracks in 1877.

Recruits assembled in April, and were joined by more experienced men in May. In 1857, the Militia Barracks (above) in Clapham Terrace were built to house the stores and permanent staff. The regiment paraded every morning in Clapham Terrace, after which, led by its fine band, the men marched through the town to the Cricket Field (later Victoria Park), for Drill Practice. A second Drill was held in the afternoon. Official inspections were carried out by Lord Leigh in his uniform as Lord Lieutenant. To offset the rigours of training, a reading room with light refreshments was available in the evening at the Town Hall. Concerts and entertainments were organised at the Public Hall in Windsor Street. Officers dined at the Regent Hotel, entertained by the band stationed in the garden. The Militia's daily drilling, marching and military band provided Leamington residents and visitors with a lively and interesting spectacle during April and May.

They were sadly missed, along with the trading income they brought to the town when the yearly training sessions ceased. Now residential housing, a large portion of the Barracks still exists, opposite Clapham Terrace Primary School.

Jo Clark

Images: Outline drawing of Barracks: Wm Kendall, County Surveyor July 29 1856. (Bill Gibbons archive), Photograph: Barry Franklin



Lantern Corner. What Happened?

Before (1890s)



c1890's
A busy thoroughfare but after heavy rain, care must be taken at Lantern Corner.

and After (90 years later):



Old maps of Leamington show this area already developing in 1823, and very heavily developed by the time of the Board of Health map thirty years later.

Known to locals as the Lantern Stores until at least the 1950s, selling tobacco in one half, and sweets in the other, a number of older images, including the postcard from the late 19th century, show a three-to-four-storey building at the end of Regent Grove. Modern snapshots show a simple two-storey building.

Does anyone know how/why/when Lantern Corner's upper storeys were removed?

Mick Cullen. Images:Jo Claydon

Leamington College for Boys



The Leamington History Group was well represented at the recent topping-out ceremony for the old Leamington College building in Binswood Avenue. Six LHG members, including both the Chairman and Vice-chairman, are old boys of the school and they donned their old school ties and scarves for a nostalgic trip down memory lane. Kenneth Owen (left) is seen in conversation with Peter Coulls, Mark Ryan chats to one of his contemporaries, Brian Ballinger in the old school Assembly Hall

The Eagle Comic Society

In April, we were asked to give a talk to the annual get together of, held at the Falstaff Hotel in Leamington. Mindy Chillery gave her presentation 'Leamington Boys', based on LHG Chairman Alan Griffin's book, 'Leamington Lives Remembered'. Mindy, (far right) is seen with organiser of the weekend John Swan and other members of the Eagle Society with their iconic 1950s comics.

Alan Griffin



Photos: Alan Griffin

Royal Leamington Spa Town Walks

Thanks to funding for publicity from the Town Council, and support from LHG, the free Guided Walks have made a welcome return to the town centre for the summer. From mid-June to mid-September, experienced volunteer guides will be available to lead walks lasting about 1 hour, at either 10.30, 2.30 or 7 pm every Tuesday and Wednesday.

We are happy to take bookings for Groups, in return for a donation to LHG funds.

Each walk, either exploring the town north of the river, or looking at the original Spa, in south town, will start from the South Lodge entrance to Jephson Gardens, opposite the Pump Rooms. Further details are available from the Town Hall, on 01926 450906, or the LHG website, www.leamingtonhistory.co.uk

Come and join us! Every nook and cranny of the town will be explored.

Michael Pearson

Where could you find this? [answer on P 4]



Allan Jennings

The Glasshouse, Jephson Gardens

Has anyone any images of the old glasshouses in Jephson Gardens? If you have, Laura Smith, the Park Ranger in Jephson Gardens, please contact her at ranger@action21.co.uk or via LHG at South Lodge on Tuesday Mornings.

Monday Meeting Reviews, with Tessa Whitehouse

Discovery and Restoration of Chedhams Yard, Wellesbourne

On Monday, 22nd April we welcomed David Close who spoke enthusiastically about the discovery and 11 year-long renovation of Chedhams Yard, off Chestnut Square in the heart of Wellesbourne. The Yard had been worked by five generations of Chedham family wheelwrights and blacksmiths, until 1965 when it ceased to trade. Over the next 35 years the site became derelict, forgotten and overgrown. But, in 2001, this little gem was re-discovered. Realising its historical value, a keen group of volunteers worked on the site restoring the buildings and putting all the abandoned equipment back into working order, but soon had to face the fact that upwards of £1million would be needed to restore the yard fully. So they entered the B.B.C. "Restoration" competition, and to their great joy, they won! The prize, topped up with a substantial Heritage Lottery Fund grant, provided the funds to complete the project. The site finally opened to the public in June 2012, with a visitor centre and education and learning centre, bringing crafts of the past into the present day, - an attraction which will put Welles-bourne well and truly on the map.

Leamington's Victorian Sewers

The reason for the extensive road works around the town were explained at our May meeting when Geoff Hancock gave a talk about the history of Leamington's sewers and the work in progress to

improve them. The sewerage system, first developed in the mid - 19th century, was one of the first in the country, combining household sewerage and surface water from north and south of the town for onward treatment at the Princes Drive centre. In the 1970s the system was upgraded and waste water was then pumped straight to Longbridge in Warwick. By the millennium, the Victorian sewers could no longer cope, many were on the verge of collapse and flooding occurred in as many as 100 properties after heavy rainfall. A new upgrading programme was started in 2010, replacing sewer pipes and building underground overflow tanks to hold surplus water which is slowly released into the system following heavy storms. Heavy machinery, with drills like the Mole used for the Channel Tunnel, were brought in to facilitate the insertion of wide-bore, stronger pipework. However, in some streets, where the old sewers had partially collapsed, the digging had to be done by hand. The work is scheduled for completion at the end of 2014, but in the meantime there will be considerable disruption in the High Street/Radford Road area, after which further work should not be necessary for many years to come. During this time a lot of money, time and patience have been needed but Mr Hancock's interesting and illustrated presentation of this programme has answered a lot of questions.

Visit to Charlecote Mill and Hampton Lucy Church

Our June meeting this year was a visit to Hampton Lucy to the 200 hundred year old Charlecote Mill, still in full working order. This is thanks to a very enthusiastic miller who has taken on the challenge to preserve it for future generations to enjoy. The mill still provides a service for those who wish to purchase locally milled flour and we were interested to learn that the local Asian community have become its chief customers. They find the flour perfect for making chapatis, thus helping to keep the mill active whilst reflecting social changes and needs in the 21st century.

A visit to the beautiful nearby church of St Peter ad Vincula was also on the agenda and here we heard Peter Bolton, a parishioner and local historian, talk about changes which have taken place over the years and restoration which still taking place.

A very pleasant summer's evening which was well-supported and enjoyed by all.

Committee Members, 2013-14

Alan Griffin	<i>Chairman</i>
Barry Franklin	<i>Vice Chairman</i>
Terry Gardner	<i>Treasurer</i>
Margaret Rushton	<i>Secretary</i>
Maggie McGreevy	
Tessa Whitehouse	
Jo Clark	
Mick Cullen	
Mick Jeffs	
Michael Pearson	
Simon Yarwood	

All members can be contacted via the Secretary, through the website:
www.leamingtonhistory.co.uk

Monday Evening Meetings to come:

N B No Meeting in August

**23 September: Richard Phillips,
Music In Leamington**

**28 October: Sheila Woolf,
The Leighs of Stoneleigh**

**20 November: Nigel Briggs,
The Bridges & Byways of Leamington Spa**

**16 December: Pat McGarrell & Colin Jennings,
Seasonal Spice
(N.B. This is 3rd, not 4th Monday)**

Answer to Picture quiz: Whitnash Parish Churchyard