

Chairman's Comments

by Barry Franklin

Well, as I write this, many of us have had the 2nd jab, with a feeling of real progress. Our LHG committee meetings, video-project team and monthly talks have been held successfully by Zoom – with many members participating. There are no signs yet as to when we can start our face-to-face events again - but we are busy planning a digital local history day, developing our 3rd town video, and investigating when our Leamington Town Walks can resume. We are always interested in your research/project ideas so please do not hesitate to contact me (01926 316268) to discuss. Keep well! We hope to see you soon!

Leamington History Monthly Talks:

Our Zoom presentations have proved to be a great success. David Fry provided a valuable insight with his talk on *Being a Local historian*; Helen Pendery gave a personal talk on family member, John Toone, Leamington builder. Barry Franklin also presented his research on the *Origins of Warwick District Council Houses (1919-39)*. **Can you identify any of the workers on the Rushmore Estate below?**



Workers on the Rushmore Estate

LHG Video Project 3 (2021)

Our team are hard at work on part 3 of Leamington's history video and preparations with film producer, Mark Ellis, are going well. Based on 1900-1930, we will tell Leamington's story through: the pre-war years (tramways, Pump Rooms, and suffragettes); the town's role in WW1; and the post-war years (homes for heroes, economy, and culture).

Celebrating Local History Day: Saturday 25 September 2021

Just preparing for our digital programme. Can you volunteer to share your expertise and passion of local history with a 20-minute entertaining talk about our town? Further details from: connections@leamingtonhistory.co.uk

Ray Pullin: Leamington Stonemason by Kay Bugg

A Leamingtonian, who literally left his mark on the town, died recently at the age of 100. He was Raymond John Pullin, well known stonemason. He was born on 23rd September 1920 in Beaconsfield Street. Ray became a pupil of Clapham Terrace School and later Champion School, in Leicester Street. His father ran a stonemasonry business in High Street and his family were active members of St Mary's Church Leamington, where Ray was in the choir. After a six-month apprenticeship with Cundalls, the architects, Ray's father insisted that he join the family firm which he was reluctant to do.

When war broke out, Ray served in the Royal Navy, firstly at Scapa Flow and then in the Mediterranean where he was involved in many operations. When war finished, Ray re-joined the family firm and never looked back. As well as completing many commissions in Leamington and the surrounding area, his work can be seen in many other parts of the country. Ray devoted a lot of his time to local organisations and charities and served as a

magistrate. In 1947 Ray married Eileen Wilson, a local girl, and, after living in Leamington for many years they moved to Offchurch. In later years, they relocated to a care home in Hove to be nearer to their son, Mark, and his family.

As well as gravestones and other memorials, many examples of Ray's work can be seen around the town – on the gates to Jephson Gardens, the spa water fountain and a Town Hall plaque unveiled by the Queen in 1988 - to name but a few. Although the High Street business still bears the name Pullin, it no longer belongs to the family. However, Ray's name will live on in Leamington through the many examples of his intricate work.

Did you know? The Girl Scouts USA Founder lived in Wellesbourne and Leamington Spa? by Michael Pearson

Juliette Gordon Low started the USA Girl Scouts in 1912 – a girls' group that teaches useful skills and good citizenship. Low believed that all girls should have the chance to learn by taking part in outdoor and community activities.

Juliette Magill Kinzie Gordon, known as Daisy, was born in Savannah, Georgia in 1860. In 1886, she married William Low. In the Civil War aftermath, William's father, Andrew, a wealthy cotton producer moved to England, renting homes in Clarendon Square and Beauchamp Hall (now Kingsley School), Leamington. William and Juliette also moved to Beauchamp Hall after his death in 1886. They also had a house in Scotland. However, William longed for a country estate so, using his considerable inheritance, bought Wellesbourne Hall in 1889.

Juliette became friends with Robert Baden-Powell, a British Army officer, who started the Boy Scouts in England in 1907 and Girl Guides in 1910. She became interested in the new youth movement, forming a group of Girl Guides in Scotland, 2 groups in London; and then at her home in Savannah, in 1912, having move back there after her husband's death in 1905.

In 1913 Girl Guides changed to Girl Scouts, spreading nationally. Low served as its president from 1915-1920. In 1919, she represented the USA at the first International

Council of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. By 1927 the U.S. had over 140,000 Girl Scouts - with groups in every state – growing to over 3.2 million members by the early 21st century.



LHG: Lockdown Living History: 2021

By Ian McCutcheon

Look out for our lockdown challenge on our LHG website. Thanks to all who contributed and captured what life was like for us!

“I can remember a 1980s' TV documentary warning about an overdue plague/killer flu. I, like most people, never gave this a second thought - until last year. Even then, amidst earlier government statements suggesting that the UK threat was minimal, it didn't sink home properly until the March lockdown. Even then, the thought of this lasting more than a few weeks seemed totally alien. A strange time with continuous changing rules: unable to mix socially, keeping to 2 metres apart, only meeting outdoors, being illegal to holiday or even visit those seriously ill in hospital - for fear of spreading infection. I have never experienced anything like this. I used the time catching up on my music recording. Yet, for many others, this was a difficult time, particularly for those living alone. Instinctively, we are herd animals so being separated is hard. Telephone or 'Zoom' chats helped but this was not as nice as meeting up. On the plus side, unlike other pandemics, scientists used technology to overcome the virus with vaccinations. If I have learned anything from this, it is how much in the past, I have taken for granted in my day-to-day life.”

Upcoming Zoom Meetings 7.30 p.m.

28 June Transport: Anthony Coulls

26 Jul Sari Fabrics: Nigel Briggs

27 Sep Leamington's Imperial Past: Ben Richardson

25 Oct Local Architects: Mick Jeffs

29 Nov Sheila Wolfe: Queen Victoria and the Royal Parks

Dec (TBA) Christmas Social