



LEIGHWAY

The newsletter of the Leigh Society
An eye to the future with an ear to the past in the heart of Leigh

LEIGHWAY GETS BIGGER

We at Leighway hope you all agree that the magazine has been a great success and the steady influx of articles from Society members shows that it is read and looked forward to. Up to now we have tried to produce 3 issues a year which for me has proved a little taxing due to other commitments. Don't worry we still intend that you should get your subscription's worth. Instead of 3 issues we will reduce to 2 a year in winter and summer but they will be 12 pages (or more if we have the content) instead of 8 pages long. This avoids the rather sharp turnaround between the January and April editions. Any urgent issues that arise or of which members need to be notified will be circulated separately or with the AGM papers. We will also give advance notice of events etc at meetings and in the window of the Heritage Centre. We hope members will understand and approve Happy New Year to you all.



Carole

THE CHAIRMAN'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE

As we go into the new year it is fitting that we look back to the past year and pen a word of thanks to those who contributed to its success. In all, it has been a very good period. We have had a bit of a move around in the Heritage Centre which we think has greatly enhanced the layout and convenience for visitors and helpers. Our thanks go to those who, rain or shine, man the Centre. Special thanks and best wishes to Mary Newton who has recently retired from service. We still need more helpers so if you have some spare time why not give it a go and contact Margaret Buckley.

It has been a very busy year with visiting school parties, up to 90 strong, who receive a talk about the Old Town and a slide show by Margaret, John Porter or myself.

On your behalf I would also like to thank the Committee who meet monthly to steer things along. The Committee also comment on all planning applications in the conservation areas a role we take very seriously. We now look forward to another bumper year with Plumbs Cottage firmly in our sights and the laying out of Strand Wharf by the Town Council.

My last thankyou is to you the members for your continued support and I wish you a very very happy new year.

Frank Bentley

TONY MEDDLE

It is sad to start this new year with the news of the loss of a stalwart of Old Leigh. Many members will have read in the local press of the passing of Tony Meddle.

Tony was for a short time Chairman of the Leigh Society and brought to it his wealth of local knowledge about the Old Town and the fishing industry and his great enthusiasm for anything to do with Leigh. Tony gave us much information on the cockling industry in Leigh and we are including within this newsletter a short narrative prepared by Lyn Davies from information supplied by Tony and latterly, Ron Meddle.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Tony's family.

DIARY DATES

Unless otherwise stated, all events will be held at Wesley Hall, Elm Road Methodist Church at 8 p.m. There is a small entrance fee of 50p for members and £1 for non members to help cover the cost of the hall.

17 March		Hidden Places in the Landscape - Archaeology - Rosemary Arcot
13 March	7.30pm	Concert - Cliff Town URC
27 March	8pm	Quiz – Leigh Sailing Club
7/10 May		Trip to Stratford-upon-Avon
21 April		AGM and Society slideshow
19 May		Southend Trams – Richard Delahoy
25-27 June		Leigh Folk Festival
11-12 September		Leigh Regatta
13 October		Romance of the River – Tony Farnham
17 November		Romany History – Paul Stevens
December		Christmas Comicals – TBA
December		Christmas lunch - TBA

CHRISTMAS COMICALS

Once again the Comicals were a resounding success raising over £500 towards the Plumbs project.

Great performances were turned in by all concerned and the theme Radio Days seemed to strike a chord with many, evidenced by the enthusiastic community singing.

We also had a number of children taking part which was especially pleasing and we hope they will continue to be interested for the future.

Well done to everyone for all their hard work – here's to the next one.

SOME CORNER OF A FOREIGN FIELD

The Lodwick family originated in Shopland, as far as existing records can tell, when in the late 1600s Peter Lodick was a yeoman of Shopland and also owned Littlehouse on Foulness Island.

His son John came in to possession of Littlehouses on the death of his brother Jeremias and on the death of his mother in 1731 he inherited certain 'horse pastures' and 'horse grasses' which she had purchased after her husband's death from Sarah Morebeck. Peter also possessed a property on the ridge called a 'fowling' and another on Estwick both within and without the seabank together with several fishing grounds upon the shore called 'kiddles'.

He left his property to his 2 sons Peter and John (who had married into the another local landed family, the Kerstemans). And so we come to John's son Peter who is the subject of this story.

To the west of Mahableshwar in India at about 4.8 km is Lodwick Point named in honour of General Peter Lodwick who was the first British officer to climb the hill. With the permission of the government a memorial pole was erected on this point by the only son of General Lodwick, R.W. Lodwick.

The column is about twenty-five feet high from the ground to the top of the urn which surmounts the pillar. On the west of the base of the monument is the head of the General, sculptured in white marble, protected by stout tin wire in an iron frame. On the south side is written :

In memory of
General Peter Lodwick,
Second son of John Lodwick, Esq., S. Shoebury, Essex,
who entered the Hon. E. I. Co.'s service in 1799
and died at Bagneres de Bigorre, France,
August 28th, 1873, aged 90.
SENIOR OFFICER OF H. M.'s. FORCES IN INDIA

On the east side is written :

In 1803-04, he saw service as subaltern in connection with the operation of the Army under Sir Arthur Wellesley. He was Brigade Major of Captain Ford's Subsidiary Force at the Battle of Kirkee, November 5th 1817, when 2800 British Troops defeated the Peshva's Army, and was present at the taking of Purandhar and other hill forts. He commanded a Regiment at Kittur in 1824; he subsequently became Town Major of Bombay; and closed his career in India as Resident of Satara. The first European who set foot on these hills, he made known the salubrity of the climate, and led to the establishment of the

Mahabaleshwar Sanatorium, thus conferring an inestimable benefit on the Bombay Presidency.

On the north side is written :

The Point, now by order of Government designated Lodwick Point in honor of his name, he reached alone in 1827, after hours of toil through the dense forest. Here, therefore, as the most appropriate spot this monument has, with the permission of Government, been erected by his only son, R. W. Lodwick, of Her Majesty's Bombay Civil Service. Accountant General of Madras in 1874.

Mahabaleshwar is now a major tourism centre and described as follows by the Indian authorities:

Nestling in the curvaceous mountain ranges of the western ghats of Maharashtra is the cool misty resort of Mahabaleshwar. Away from the crowds and noise of the city, the resort is an ideal holiday destination.

Mahabaleshwar seems to belong to the colonial era when people travelled up to the resorts to escape the heat of the plains. It still retains some of the old world charm and make an ideal holiday destination.

Among the hill resorts of the state, Mahabaleshwar is very popular. Tucked away in the Satara district, it is best approached from Pune. Spared the commercialization that has affected the hill resorts of north and south India, the resort offers a clean, calm and thoroughly refreshing alternative.

The summer capital of the erstwhile Bombay Presidency, Mahabaleshwar retains its quintessential charm, despite the increasing crowds that visit the town. Numerous majestic mansions built during the days of the British, still stand as monuments of the Raj.



Lodwick Monument, Mahabaleshwar

A kiddle is a kind of basketwork for catching fish

A SURVIVOR'S MEMORY

In the last edition we had several articles by members who had taken part in the rescue operations during the 1953 floods. The following is a short piece by one of the rescued, Barbara Jolly.

At the time of the 1953 floods I was 8 and a half years old and living on Canvey Island with my widowed mother, Frances Warren. We lived in a tiny bungalow in Maurice Road, a turning off the Esplanade, close to the sea wall. The first we knew there was a 'problem' was when our elderly neighbour, Mr Cleaver, came round on the Sunday morning about 6 o'clock to tell us the Island had been flooded. His old dog Lassie kept barking and wouldn't stop so he got out of bed to see what was wrong and stepping onto the bedside rug his feet went down into ice cold water. The whole of the garden and surrounding areas were flooded but compared to many areas on the Island we were very lucky, we didn't have a great deal of water indoors. The way the bungalow was built the kitchen and bathroom had the most amount of water as they were on a slightly lower level so at least the beds were warm and dry! The gas and electricity were off so we had no way of cooking or making hot drinks.

On the Sunday morning my Uncle Les, mum's brother, who had moved on to the Island just 10 days previously, waded down from the Point at the far end of the Island to make sure that we were safe and sound. On returning home, Les and his wife were evacuated that day and went back to London to the house they had just sold.

My mum was one of the 'defiant' ones and refused to leave our home on the Sunday and we sat in the cold and damp with just candles giving an eerie glow and listening to the water lapping outside. One of mum's concerns was for the chickens that we kept in the back garden for eggs. Fortunately they had a roosting area so were able to keep out of the water but their food was a problem.

Early on Monday morning a rowing boat arrived at the gate and we were virtually ordered to leave, with not much more than the clothes we stood up in. We were then taken down the road with several other people until the water was too shallow for the boat. We then faced quite a long walk to the High Street where army trucks were waiting to take people off the Island and to safety. As we got out of the boat a man came along pushing a bicycle and as I was the youngest there I remember being sat on the bike and pushed down the road to wait for mum to join me. We were then loaded on to the army trucks and taken to Benfleet.

Many people went to King John School, which was opened as a rescue centre but we went to Westcliff to mum's sister-in-law, Rose Young, who had a house in Westcliff Park Drive. As far as I can remember we stayed with Auntie Rose for about 6 weeks during which time mum made several trips back to our home to check on the condition of our bungalow and also to feed the chickens, all of whom survived.

As a child my main recollection on returning home was the garden. Everywhere we looked there were hundreds of dead worms which the salt water had killed – it was quite a gruesome but funny sight.

Barbara Jolly

OUTINGS

The trip to Stratford-upon-Avon is now booked and everyone is looking forward to it. Ann our intrepid outings organiser is investigating the possibility of a trip to the new Docklands Museum in London for later in the year.

REMEMBER EVA ANNIE

Readers will recall in an earlier issue of Leighway we carried a very interesting article about the Eva Annie by David Hurrell.

David's research is continuing and he would very much like to hear from any members who have knowledge or recollections of W H (Billy) Theobald of Beltons Farm. Billy held the manorial rights to Leigh as well as being a prominent local businessman. He also owned the Billet for a while and had a half share in the ferry rights to Canvey Island. David wonders if anyone has any photographs of Billy which he could see.

David's interests also extend to Leigh Building Supply which was owned by Bill Bridge and with which Billy had business links. They had a large fleet of Thames barges operating from Leigh Creek until the 1950s and of course one of these was the Eva Annie. David is very keen to find pictures of the Eva Annie.

David's final request concerns an R Stimson. David has a collection of old barge photographs taken by Mr Stimson and would very much like to get in touch with his family. Does anyone know of them?

If you think you can help in any of these quests please contact David on 01702 552668.



The remains of the Eva Annie – David Hurrell

ARTICLES FOR LEIGHWAY

This is a plea to those of you who may be reluctant to put pen to paper but who nevertheless have within you the magnum opus (or minimum even).

I can keep churning out articles about Leigh families and interesting historical snippets for as long as necessary and will continue to do so but I know that interests of the readers of Leighway are far wider than that so this is a plea for all of you who feel you can scribble something.

It would be especially nice to have some more articles about natural history. We have had some excellent articles in the past from members on the bird life and flora of the area and I am sure many others of you take great delight in these subjects so tell us about your favourite walks or natural history in your particular area.

That includes all you ex pats – lets hear about your local area too or why your family ended up on foreign shores.

I am sure there are many of you who also have interesting hobbies or travellers' tales. Where do you seashiders go for your holidays? What about recommendations for days out or places to visit with a short review of them for other members?

How about a 'Memory Lane' column. As development moves on apace if you remember what used to be on a specific site – tell us about it and your memories of it. This is one way of keeping a record of change in the town.

If anyone has an idea for a serial column on a specific subject let me know – even if you can't write a piece or do the research it will give me some ideas for future issues.

Articles for the next edition should be with me by 31 July and sent to the Heritage Centre or e-mail to carole.pavitt@btopenworld.com

Carole

LIKE FRED KARNO'S CIRCUS



This picture, taken from the Leigh and Westcliff Graphic in 1913 is of Leslie Karno, the 8 year old son of Fred Karno the famous comedian and sketch producer, showing off his real American cowboy outfit.

The picture refers to him as a Leigh Cowboy but whether they lived in Leigh or were just passing through with a show is not known. They seem to have been centred around the Richmond area. Does anyone have any idea if the Karno's lived in Leigh? The phrase 'like Fred Karno's Army' is probably a bit dated now but some people still use it to describe a ramshackle outfit. Fred Wescott, better known as Fred Karno, transformed the music hall by creating a riot of laughter out of chaos, originating the custard pie in the face.

The poor lad who left Nottingham for a tough apprenticeship as an acrobat in Victorian show business rose through flair and persistence to be one of the greatest impresarios and showmen in the world. He employed a group of talented comedians which at one time included Charlie Chaplin.

The British Army sang songs about him and his name was often mentioned in the House of Commons to describe a muddle somewhere.

Fred Karno's Army, meaning a chaotic outfit, became enshrined in the English language.

"We Are Fred Karno's Army" was sung to the melody of "Aurelia", otherwise known as "The Church's One Foundation", by Samuel S Wesley, 1864.

"We are Fred Karno's army,
We are the ragtime infantry.
We cannot fight, we cannot shoot,
What bleeding use are we?
And when we get to Berlin
We'll hear the Kaiser say,
"Hoch, hoch! Mien Gott, what a bloody rotten lot,
Are the ragtime infantry."



Fred Karno

THE STREET WHERE YOU LIVE

Lord Roberts Avenue

Who was Lord Roberts?



Frederick Sleight Roberts

Field Marshall Lord Roberts of Kandahar, V.C.,
K.G., K.P., G.C.B., O.M., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

'Bobs' as Lord Roberts was commonly known was born on 30 September 1832 in Cawnpore, India and died on the 14 November 1914 at Saint-Omer, France. He was a British field marshal, an outstanding combat leader in the Second Afghan War (1878-80) and the South African War (1899-1902), commander in chief of the British Army (1901-04). Foreseeing World War I, he was one of the earliest advocates of compulsory military service.

Lord Roberts first distinguished himself during the suppression of the Indian Mutiny (1857-58). On 1 September 1880, he scored the decisive victory of the Second Afghan War, defeating Ayub Khan's Afghan Army near Qandahar. From 1885 to 1893 he was commander in chief in India. As the second British commander in chief (1899-1900) in the South African War, he ended a succession of British defeats; captured Bloemfontein, capital of the Orange Free State Republic, and annexed the state as the Orange River Colony; took the cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria; and defeated Boer commandos at Bergendal.

A field marshal from 1895, he gave way to Horatio Herbert Kitchener as commander in chief in South Africa in November 1900.

Roberts was created a baron in 1892 and an earl and viscount in 1901.

On 2 January 1858 at Khodagunge, India, on following up the retreating enemy, Lieutenant Roberts, as he then was, saw in the distance two sepoy's going away with a standard. He immediately gave chase, overtaking them just as they were about to enter a village. Although one of them fired at him the lieutenant was not hit and he took possession of the standard, cutting down the man who was carrying it. He had also on the same day saved the life of a sowar who was being attacked by a sepoy. For these actions he was awarded the Victoria Cross.

On 15 December 1899 at the Battle of Colenso, South Africa, his son, the Hon Frederick Hugh Sherston Roberts, with several others, tried to save the guns of the 14th and 66th Batteries, Royal Field Artillery. Under shell and rifle fire Lieutenant Roberts with two other officers helped to hook a team into a limber and then to limber up a gun. While doing so, he fell badly wounded and later died of his wounds. He too was awarded the Victoria Cross. Quite a family.

WHERE THE STREETS ARE PAVED WITH GOLD!

This year marks the 90th birthday of a descendant of Leigh who has never visited this corner of the world but thinks of us and has done all her life.

Agnes Clarke, nee McVittie, is my mother Violet Meddle's Canadian cousin, and her mother was Eliza Osborne 1881 – 1968.

Eliza Osborne was born in Leigh in 1881 and grew up around the fishing community and went into service locally. The family she worked for must have been very kind to Eliza because she kept photographs of their children until she died.

Alfred McVittie was born in London into a comfortable home, his father was an accountant. Alfred was young and a keen amateur footballer with 21 medals awarded to him at the time he came to Leigh to play a football match against the Leigh Town team. Here in Leigh he met the young Eliza Osborne and they were married in St Clements Church in 1902 and settled into their first home, one of the Pottery Cottages.

In 1903 their first child, a son William, was born and Alfred made the decision to leave Leigh, Eliza and William to seek his fortune in Canada where he had heard "the streets were paved with gold." He would send for Eliza as soon as he could.

He arrived in Manitoba where the temperature was 40 below at the time. He heard of work in Wallaceburg, Ontario and moved there arriving with something less than 1 Canadian Dollar in his pocket!

It was 1907 before he had made enough to send for Eliza and little William who was now 4 years old and could not have remembered his Daddy.

Eliza and William left all their extended Leigh family and travelled into the unknown by sea on the ship KENSINGTON to meet Alfred in Canada.

Eliza always remembered and told the story of how little William would sob "I want to go home. I want to go home."

Eliza changed her name to Elizabeth in Canada and she and Alfred had two more children, Janet in 1908 and Agnes in 1914 and later 14 grandchildren – William had nine children between 1926-1947. Janet had one child and Agnes four.

When William was 17 he went sailing on the Great Lake vessels and surely must have had the Osborne genes for the love of the water.

Alfred built three homes for his family each one better than the one before and they lived a very comfortable family life until he died in 1936.

Agnes says that after her mother's death she found many poems that she had cut from magazines and they all spoke of the yearning to be in England. She told her children many times of the bluebells and primroses and wallflowers that grew here. Later her family tried to persuade her to make the trip back to Leigh but she could never bring herself to do it. She was widowed at the age of 55 in 1936 and lived surrounded by her children and grandchildren in Windsor, Ontario.

Agnes is her surviving child in Windsor, Ontario and from her Osborne and Meddle family members I wish her

HAPPY 90th BIRTHDAY AGNES in 2004

Carol Cass

And so say all at Leighway

Carol Cass' grandmother was Charlotte Osborne, Eliza's sister, who later married Henry John 'Peck' Meddle.

As a footnote to Carol's article here is a little information about the SS Kensington on which Alfred went to Canada



The KENSINGTON was built by J & G Thompson Ltd, Glasgow in 1893 for the America Line. She was a 8,669 gross ton vessel, length 480ft x beam 57.2ft, one funnel, four masts, twin screw and a speed of 14 knots. There was accommodation for 100-2nd and 929-3rd class passengers. She was launched on 26 October 1893 and sailed on her maiden voyage from Liverpool to Philadelphia on 28 June 1894. On 28 August 1895 she started her first voyage for the Red Star Line from Philadelphia to New York and Antwerp, and her first sailing from Antwerp to New York on 21 September 1895. In 1899 or earlier, her 2nd class accommodation was increased to 250 and on 14 March 1903 she commenced her last Antwerp – New York voyage. She was then chartered to the Dominion Line and started her first voyage for them on 29 April 1903 when she sailed from Liverpool for Quebec and Montreal. One Alfred McVittie on board. Her last voyage started on 8 November 1908 when she left Montreal for Quebec and Liverpool and she was scrapped in 1910 in Italy. [North Atlantic Seaway by N.R.P. Bonsor, vol.3, p.943]

A BITTER TWIST

It would not have been more than a month or so before Dunkirk that I and my friend John Wilson were chatting with Harry Noakes as he was sieving cockles in the Osborne shed opposite The Crooked Billet. The conversation went something like this: Seeing that John was in the uniform of an RAF air gunner, Harry remarked that there's no way you'd get him to go up there in one of those flying machines, and that he'd feel a lot safer down on the briny.

Well, unhappily for two of Leigh's finest sons, both were lost. Mr. Noakes on the briny where he was sure he'd be pretty safe (serving in the navy, I quickly got to know that wasn't the case), and John, shot down in May 1941 over the English Channel while attacking the German Fleet fleeing the port of Brest for their respective ports in Germany.

Just a little bit of history.

Douglas Champion.



Harry Noakes

An Australian Connection with Leigh-on-Sea



Alfred Sydney Emery

At some stage in our lives we all have a desire to find our roots. Mine was kindled by a visit back to the UK from my home in far flung Western Australia which is about as far away from Leigh as you can get.

Having been born at Rochford and spent my first 10 years in Westcliff, I already had fond memories of Leigh, with its cockle sheds, boats and nearby Hadleigh Castle. I was also aware of my father's family's long history in Leigh. A direct ancestor of my father was a Richard Emery (fisherman) who was recorded as having his funeral at St Clements in 1690. I am sure that our family connection with Leigh dates back even further and in time I will take up the challenge of tracing these details.

As with many other old Leigh families the Emerys married locals which saw such unions as that of Elizabeth Emery and Abraham Osborne, and Elizabeth Emery (another) and Benjamin Cotgrove.

My grandfather Arthur Sidney Emery was born in Leigh on 12th February 1875 and like many of the children of the time had his education drastically cut by the need to contribute to the family income. In time he married Louisa Loveday of Prittlewell and between them produced a number of offspring, including my father Alfred Sidney Emery on 6th June 1921.

As a young man Alf as he was always known grew up in Balmoral Road, Westcliff and after leaving school he was employed in a local laundry.

In 1940, at the age of 19 he decided it would be a better move to voluntarily enlist in the navy, rather than wait and perhaps finish up in the army, where three of his older brothers were already.

Upon enlistment Alf Emery was posted to the Royal Naval Patrol Service and spent his early time at Littlehampton in Sussex, where aboard Patrol Boat "Rosabelle" he participated in the successful rescue of allied fighter pilots shot down during "dog fights". In 1942 he was transferred to the RNPS training base HMS Europa (also known as the Sparrow's Nest) at Lowestoft, before being placed aboard the Arctic Hunter, a trawler converted to operate as a minesweeper.

Between 1942 and 1945 Alf Emery saw continuous service as a Seaman Gunner on board the Arctic Hunter, including mine clearance operations before and during the Allied invasion of Europe on 6th June 1944 ("D Day").

On 1st January 1945 he was Mentioned in Despatches to the King for distinguished service and was discharged in March 1946.

Alf Emery re-entered the civilian workforce as a plastic press operator at the premises of E.K.Cole near Southchurch Park.

He met my mother (Beryl May Thring of Westcliff) during this time and they were married on 8th July 1950. Alf and Beryl produced three sons in the UK (me being the eldest) and for the

next 11 years were residents of Electric Avenue, Westcliff, whilst Alf was employed at the Ford Motor Company at Dagenham.

In 1961, in search of a better life for their family Alf and Beryl emigrated to Australia, initially landing in Melbourne (the capital of the State of Victoria) where Alf took up employment with the Ford Motor Company of Australia. Life in Melbourne, although better than that in the UK at that time, was still challenging and after a chance contact with some old wartime acquaintances Alf and Beryl decided to pack up the family and their belongings and head to the State of Western Australia. This was no mean feat as it involved driving over 3000 km on mostly unsealed roads to the township of Norseman, a small gold mining town located about 200 km south of the world famous gold mining city of Kalgoorlie.

Western Australia was just entering a mining boom comparable to those of the famous rushes of the 1800s, but this time not only gold shone but also nickel and many other minerals. Employment was for the asking and the pay was much better than that in the cities (a consolation for living in a remote town of only 2000 people, 200 km from the coast and 600 km from the State capital of Perth).

Alf Emery again showed his flexibility by at first taking up employment in one of the local mines as an operator in the rock crushing section, before he moved to the drilling division of the neighbouring gold mine where he worked on the drilling rigs trying to unlock the riches of the land.

It was during their time at Norseman that their fourth son was born, giving the family their first real "Aussie". Life in an outback town was good and many happy years were spent there.

Finally the family moved to Perth (the call of civilization became too strong) and the family expanded as the sons each married and grandchildren started to arrive.

Sadly my Father passed away, after a short illness, on 8th July 2003, my Parent's 53rd wedding anniversary.

Our family's links with Leigh are not entirely broken as my Father's only remaining sibling, Douglas Elias George Emery still resides in Leigh (as do many of my cousins) after a long and distinguished career in HM Customs, for which he received the British Empire Medal.

My Uncle Doug also distinguished himself during World War II, where as a member of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for outstanding bravery and devotion to duty during the attack on Monte Cece (Italy) in October 1944.

Although a naturalised Australian and a resident of this country for over 40 years something happens when I return to Leigh for a visit, it is as though my ancestors are there saying 'welcome home' !

I would like to thank Carole Pavitt of the Leigh Society for providing me with an enormous amount of family history, without this my ability to travel back through the generations would have been made much more difficult.

If any reader has any other information, photographs etc of my ancestors I would welcome their correspondence and can be contacted at anytime at lsee@bigpond.com or on fax number +61 8 9310 3447. Thank you for your interest.

Les Emery



Alfred with his parents Arthur and Louisa

HAVE YOU GOT A BEEFEATER IN YOUR FAMILY?

Whilst doing some research on the people of Leigh (especially the women) who married and moved away I came upon the following interesting snippet. Unfortunately I have been unable to identify the Elizabeth or Mary Ann in question. Both being common names there were several born in Leigh at the right period and she/they could have been any one/two of them. If anyone has either lady in their family could they please let me know and help solve a mystery.

In 1881 there was living at the Tower of London a Chelsea Pensioner and Warden of the Tower named Kester Knight. Living with him was his wife Elizabeth, born in Leigh and a son, Edwin Thomas aged 16 born in Chatham. Elizabeth was stated as being 54 which would have meant she was born in about 1827. Edwin Thomas was a lawyer's clerk. So far searches of the marriage registers have failed to reveal a marriage for Kester and Elizabeth.

Interestingly in 1891 Kester is still at the Tower but is married to a Mary Ann aged 64 born at Leigh. I hazard a guess but either Elizabeth and Mary Ann are the same person or Kester's



first wife died and he remarried another Lady of Leigh possibly a relative of his first wife. Given that the ages for both ladies would have been the same I lean towards the former and the idea that Elizabeth had a raft of Christian names which she used. Either way what family did she/they come from in Leigh? Kester had had a long and distinguished career in the service of the Queen.

He was a Serjeant Major in the Royal Sappers and Miners and had been born in 1827 in Haslemere, Surrey the son of Thomas and Elizabeth Knight.

He attested in May 1846 at Woolwich as being a carpenter and he served in Gibraltar for 5 years 8 months, in the Crimea and Turkey for 2 years 2 months, then in China for 2 years 9 months. In all he served 22 years 295 days and was discharged in 1869 at Chatham to live at New Brompton.

He was a Yeoman and Warden of the Tower from 14 July 1878 and in 1881 he was living at Broad Arrow Tower with Elizabeth and their son and in 1891 with Mary Ann in the same Tower.

His medal tally is quite impressive:

Queen's Crimea (Inkermann and Sebastopol)
China 1857-1860
Meritorious Service Medal 1869 with £10 annuity for gallantry in China)
French Medaille Militaire
Turkish Crimea Medal

He is the only Yeoman Warder entitled to the China Medal, his MSM was one of only 15 and the French medal one of only 7 awarded to his regiment.

The citation for his French medal reads

'Joined the Army at Scutari in May, 1854. Present at every bombardment. Specially selected by Colonel Tylden for important daily duties in the trenches of the right attack, and was subsequently strongly recommended by him for promotion which he received''.

In 1887 he was the senior RS & M and RE MSM annuitant. He died in Broad Arrow Tower and is buried at Bow 11 June 1894. (Information from 'The Yeoman of the Guard' Ian McInnes)

So how does someone become a 'Beefeater'?

The office of Yeoman of the Guard was created by Henry VII in 1485.

The duties of the Yeoman Warders or 'Waiters' was to guard prisoners and attend the gates. Hence they were called 'Waiters' and their period of duty was called the 'Wait'.

Strictly speaking the Yeoman Warders should not be called 'beefeaters', they did not attend the King's table.

For years the post of Yeoman Warder could be purchased for 250 guineas and some posts were in the personal gift of the Lieutenants. The Duke of Wellington ended this system and instead awarded the post to worthy non-commissioned officers of the Household Cavalry, Foot Guards and Infantry of the Line solely on the Regiment's recommendation. Nothing much has changed since then and the Warders are recruited from the Royal Marines, Army, RAF and must have attained the rank of Warrant Officer, Staff Sergeant or Flight Sergeant.

Originally the appointment had been for life but in 1688 this was scrapped and the warrants are now held at the monarch's pleasure. The modern Yeoman are civil servants and retire at 65. They must live in the Tower.

Nowadays the Warders are responsible for the security of the Tower and its visitors and control the gates and the wharf and all areas open to the public. They also give guided tours.

Kester Knight was also a Chelsea Pensioner. The Royal Hospital at Chelsea was founded in 1682 and built by Sir Christopher Wren.

The purpose of the Hospital originally was to house army veterans who were unable to work and had over 21 years service or had been wounded in service.

The Pensioners that live at the Hospital forego their old age pension and obtain board, lodging, clothing and medical care in return.

It is not clear how Kester managed to fulfill both roles as both required residence in their respective establishments.

PLANNING DIARY

Over the course of the last year the Committee of the Leigh Society has been consulted on a number of planning applications affecting the Leigh Conservation Areas. Some have been of a minor nature but there have been one or two important applications on which we have voiced concerns. We have tried in our deliberations to ensure that standards are maintained and that care is taken with regard to any effect on the conservation areas.

One matter we have been concerned with recently is the poor quality of some of the applications that are submitted in terms of the drawings which are required to detail the proposals. We have on several occasions made this point to the Borough Council in responding to consultations and we hope in the next year to see an improvement in quality.

2004 looks likely to be the year that the new Planning Act gets Royal Assent. This introduces a whole new regime of how Council's plan for their areas and is supposed to streamline the system, which is undoubtedly cumbersome. However, many professionals doubt if the new system will shorten the processes and may very well place additional pressures on local authorities stretching their resources even further.

The Planning Bill has slipped in its Parliamentary timetable somewhat and there have been several rethinks about its content so those in the planning world aren't holding their breath just yet. As these things have a habit of changing before they get on to the statute book we will not go into an explanation now of how this will affect the individual and the area but at some future date all will be revealed.

In planning terms Southend is a Unitary Authority and has the responsibility of evolving policies for the development of both strategic and local planning. As members will know from a previous article Southend is now included within the Thames Gateway, which is the Government's national and regional priority for economic regeneration. Development plans set out the planning authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of their area.

Along with Essex County Council the Borough Council has prepared a Structure Plan which deals with strategic planning, indicating in broad terms where new development should be located, such as housing, employment, schools, roads etc.

The Council is anticipating the new planning legislation and has produced a draft revised timetable for the review of its Local Plan in the form of a Draft Local Development Scheme

You can view the draft Local Development Scheme on the Council's website at www.southend.gov.uk which gives details for making comments on the document. You should also be able to see the document at the main library and at the Council's offices, but ring first to check exactly where.

Planning affects all our lives and it is important that we have an input into what affects our local area. The Government is also very keen that the public should participate in the planning exercise.

On 15 January Keith Hill, the Planning Minister, issued a consultation paper proposing possible changes to the planning appeal process. The changes offer interested parties a greater role in the process.

Keith Hill said:

"People have a right to be involved in planning decisions which affect their communities. Whether it's an appeal on a factory, a shopping centre or a new housing development, the local community must have its say.

"We're keen to hear what planning professionals think of these changes, but we're also keen to hear from people who've been affected by planning decisions. This is your chance to tell us what you think."

The consultation follows a review of the current rules and regulations. The proposed changes are out for consultation until 14 April 2004 and can be viewed at www.odpm.gov.uk.

BENTLEY'S MAST

Several members and local dignitaries recently attended a ceremony to inaugurate the new flag pole on Strand Wharf, a welcome addition to the Old Town. The idea for the mast came from Frank Bentley, our own chairman, but also a shining light in the Scouting movement in the Old Town for many years. The Sea Scouts raised a considerable amount of money for the mast. In honour of Frank's service and idea the Sea Scouts decided to name the mast, Bentley's Mast.



RUNNING UP THE UNION FLAG

Did you know there are 19 official days when the Union flag is to be flown from Government buildings from 8am to sunset? Individuals, local authorities and other organisations may fly the Union flag whenever they wish, subject to compliance with any local planning requirement.

The 19 official occasions are:

- 20 January – Countess of Wessex's birthday
- 6 February – Her Majesty's Accession
- 19 February – Duke of York's birthday
- 1 March – St David's Day
- 10 March – Earl of Wessex's birthday
- March – Commonwealth Day (second Monday)
- 21 April – Queen's birthday
- 23 April – St George's Day
- 9 May – Europe Day
- 2 June – Coronation Day
- 10 June – Duke of Edinburgh's birthday
- June – Queen's Official birthday
- 15 August – Princess Anne's birthday
- 14 November – Prince Charles' birthday
- November – Remembrance Day
- 20 November – Her Majesty's wedding day
- 30 November – St Andrew's Day

also on the day of the opening of Parliament and on the day of the prorogation of Parliament but only in the Greater London area.

Where the Union flag flies with another flag it takes precedence for instance on Europe Day the Union flag should be alongside the Europe flag but the Union flag takes precedence if there is only one flagpole.

Flags fly at half mast on the death of the Sovereign, the funeral of a member of the Royal family, funerals of foreign rulers and of Prime Ministers and ex Prime Ministers.

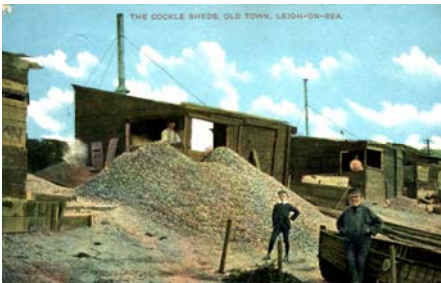
Just in case you didn't know the flag should be flown with the broader diagonal white stripe at the top left hand side of the flag nearest the flagpole.

THE COCKLE INDUSTRY

Prepared by Lyn Davies from information supplied by
Tony and Ron Meddle

Prior to the introduction of modern methods in 1988, cockle fishermen worked from small sheds similar in layout to the model we have on display in the Heritage Centre.

Cockle boats, locally called 'Bawleys' returned to Leigh on the first of the floodtide, navigating a way through the creek before the tide covered the mudflats. In the days before the introduction of navigational aids such as radar, the fishermen used the tower of St Clement's Church to help them. After dark they used some street lights on Cliff Parade which had red glass in the side facing the sea and the men lined them up to find a safe passage up the winding creek. The boats were moored in the creek opposite the owner's shed. A long plank of wood about 250mm wide was used as a ramp. Men then carried the cockles from the boat in baskets hanging from a wooden yoke, up the plank and into a corner of the shed.



cockle sheds with the piles of shells

Depending on the time of day or the weather conditions, the shed crew would either start the processing immediately, or wait until early the next day (usually about 2am). The boiler was lit one hour before processing began – sometimes the man was needed at the shed at 1am. Whilst waiting for the build-up of steam pressure which was necessary for the cooking pots, the round tank and the sifting tanks were filled with fresh water.

The cooking process began with two steel nets, each filled with approx 3.5 gallons of raw cockles in their shells (which were then still closed) being placed in each cooking pot. The lids were then fastened down and the cockles were cooked for 6 minutes at a steam pressure of 15 lbs. When cooked, the cockles still in the nets, were removed from the pots and tipped into a 'riddler' (de-sheller). This was a rectangular sieve which hung over a large sifting tank filled with fresh cold water. The sieve was shaken backwards and forwards by a strong-armed man, 60 or 70 times, to loosen the cockle meat from the shells which had opened during cooking. The meat fell through the holes of the riddler, leaving the shells on top of the wire mesh. This riddling had a very distinctive 'swish swish' sound, easily recognisable, even when the cockle sheds were not open to the public.

The shells were then tossed through an open hatch at the back of the shed to form a mountain of empty shells. The shells were then sold to be crushed for use as chicken grit or used as land drains or for putting on muddy paths to dry them sufficiently for people to walk on. Another use for the shells locally was in 'pebble dash' on the walls of houses, particularly between the wars. The Heritage Centre was at one time used for housing the cockle crushing machines.

Cockles with small shells which passed through the riddler, were taken out of the sifting tanks and placed in the round tank. The water was vigorously stirred allowing the cockle meat to float free, the shells falling to the bottom of the tank. The

cockles were removed after 3 or 4 more washes and the rubbish removed from the bottom of the tank to allow the process to begin all over again with a fresh batch. The small net for this use was called a 'Digle' pronounced 'dye-gill.'

The cockle meats were then placed in lightly salted water for local trade while others were salted down to preserve them for sale at Billingsgate Market in London. The preserved cockles could be kept for up to 6 weeks. Preserved cockles were as hard as peas and required soaking in fresh water for approx 2 days before use.

Time caught up with the cockle industry around 1972 when less labour intensive methods of collecting the cockles were introduced. Tony Meddle was the first to change over to the new method. Instead of the men having to wait for the tide to completely recede, the cockles are removed from the sand with a long suction hose, similar to those found on a vacuum cleaner. The men lean over the side of the boat and lower the 'sucker' into the water. The cockles are sucked up at a much faster rate than could be achieved by the old hand raking method.



handraking the cockles

Any weed rubbish and undersized cockles are removed by the screening, and the cockles are stowed in the hold. When the bawley arrives back at Leigh the cockles are usually removed by a machine like a road digger and conveyed ashore and taken in to the sheds for processing by modern methods under strict regulations laid down by the authorities. This has meant a major investment in new equipment by the cocklers, so that they conform to the required standards of hygiene necessary to provide a pollution free product.

The old method often had 8 to 10 men per bawley, the 'sucker' method can be managed by only 2 men. In 2000 there were 14 licensed boats registered in London, working locally. The newest bawley was about 5 years old and was built in Newhaven. Sadly none are now built at Leigh. The modern boats are made of steel and have powerful engines. Originally the bawleys had only sails, then engines were introduced in combination with small sails until finally boats were converted to engines only.

Cockles are now exported in freezer lorries, direct to several countries in Europe, including Spain, Holland and Denmark. Cockles are distributed locally and no visit to the Old Town is complete without a plate of cockles eaten in the open air on Billet Wharf.



Walking the plank

A FISHY BUSINESS



Many of our readers may well remember this wet fish shop in Southend High Street.

Its original proprietor was Thomas William Hills who was born in Leigh in 1854 and started his working life as a fisherman. In 1879 he married into the Cotgrove clan, to Edith Elizabeth of that ilk.

Unfortunately Thomas was not cut out for the fishing lark as he suffered from seasickness and so he began a fishmongery business by bringing two baskets of cockles to Southend and reinvesting the profit into more cockles until eventually he had 2 shops, the other believed to have been in Queens Road, Southend.

His daughter Daisy married William Briggs who was a photographer for the Southend Standard. Newspapers stayed in the family and their son worked for the Evening Echo and was the artist behind the Twilbe cartoons depicting the weather on the front page.

The shop in the High Street is still there and has had several occupiers over the years since the last fish was sold there. Here it is a few years ago as a record shop.



And now what is it – well you can't buy fish there but you may certainly be able to buy fishnet (stockings that is). It is the Anne Summers shop. But of course none of you will have been in there !!!!!!!

Steve Briggs the great grandson of Thomas William Hills is researching his family tree so if any of you remember the shop or have other pictures of it he would be very interested. Just get in touch with Carole through the Heritage Centre.

If you have any information or memories about any shops or premises which are now being used for something else let us know – it is all part of the social history of the area.

STRIKE UP THE BAND

Now members are in for a real treat.

David Hurrell, whose article on the Eva Annie is included in this edition, is organising a concert to raise money for the band he is associated with and for Plumbs Cottage.

The Southend Band (Civic Brass Band) conducted by Andrew Hurrell M Mus, BA (Hons), LGSM will perform 'The Best of British' a wide ranging repertoire of British music with guest artistes.

The concert will be held at Cliff Town United Reformed Church in Nelson Road (near the bowling green) on Saturday, 13 March starting at 7.30p.m.. Tickets will be £5 (£4 for concessions) - see enclosed flyer for details. The evening will finish about 9.45p.m.

This promises to be a fabulous evening and we are very grateful for David and the Band for thinking of us and helping our funds in this way.

We do hope you will all give this your support and we thank David very much for his efforts on Plumb's behalf.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

With this edition are the reminders for membership renewals – please be prompt as it helps us immeasurably in keeping things going. Remember membership is now £6 pa and includes partners (£12 overseas).

For this very reasonable sum you get two large newsletters a year and a chance to attend all our events. And of course you are doing your bit to help the Society to carry out its functions for the benefit of Leigh.

If there are any of you who wish to take advantage of the automatic renewal of your membership by Standing Order the form is included in this edition. For those of you who have already filled one in we apologise for the initial confusion of instructions.

COMPANY MATTERS

Following the last AGM one member expressed some concern about the clarity of the distinction between Directors and/or Trustees.

As Leigh Heritage Centre is a limited company, under company law it is required to have directors who have specific responsibilities to comply with the Companies Act.

As the Leigh Heritage Centre Limited is also a registered charity in order to comply with the Charities Commission rules we have trustees.

According to our Articles of Association which were set out at the formation of the company, three trustees every year are required to stand down. If there are no other nominations members are asked to elect the three to continue in office. Members of the Leigh Society elect both directors and trustees. The current situation is that the named directors are also the trustees of Leigh Heritage Ltd.

The limited company for the 2 Plumbs Yard Project was formed on the same basis.

I hope this helps to clarify who's who.

Cathy Cottridge
Company Secretary

THE GREAT FLU EPIDEMIC OF 1918

The article about Hills shop in this issue is also relevant to this article as Thomas Hills died in the great flu epidemic of 1918. as did several other Leigh folk, including Brownie Johnson, the butcher, and his wife, Florence.

In the spring of 1918 many soldiers in the trenches in France became ill complaining of sore throats, headaches and loss of appetite. Although it appeared to be highly infectious, recovery was quick and doctors called it 'three-day fever'. The soldiers called it Spanish Flu but there is no evidence it came from Spain in fact, in Spain they called it French Flu. Others said it came from the Middle Eastern battlefields, while others blamed it on China and India. A recent theory is that the Americans brought it with them when they entered the war.

For the next few months soldiers continued to be infected but few died. However, by the summer the symptoms became much more severe and about a fifth of the victims developed bronchial pneumonia or septicemic blood poisoning. Many of them died. Others developed heliotrope cyanosis which was identifiable by the bluish condition of the sufferer. This second-wave of the epidemic spread quickly. In one sector of the Western Front over 70,000 American troops were hospitalised and nearly one third of them died.

By the end of the summer the virus had reached the German Army which could not replace its sick and dying soldiers. The infection had already reached Germany and over 400,000 civilians died of the disease in 1918.

The first cases in Britain appeared in Glasgow in May 1918 but it soon spread to other towns and cities and during the next few months 228,000 people died - the highest mortality rate for any epidemic since the outbreak of cholera in 1849.

Desperate methods were used to prevent the disease spreading. Streets were sprayed with chemicals and people started wearing anti-germ masks. Some factories abandoned their no-smoking rules under the mistaken impression that tobacco fumes could kill the virus. Others believed that eating plenty of porridge would protect you. Despite valiant attempts, all treatments failed.

By September a particularly virulent strain swept through the USA and by early December about 450,000 were dead.

The country which suffered most though was India. The first cases appeared in Bombay in June 1918 and in July deaths were being reported in Karachi and Madras. With large numbers of India's doctors serving with the British Army the country was unable to cope with the epidemic. Some historians claim that between June 1918 and July 1919 over 16,000,000 people in India died. It has been estimated that throughout the world over 70 million people died of the influenza pandemic.



spraying the streets against the flu

WHY WE DO LIKE TO BE BESIDE THE SEASIDE

Well we do like to be beside the seaside
Cos we all hope the sun is going to shine
The fact that we're misled
And we should have stayed in bed
Means we pack our bags and head for sunnier climes.

Well we all like to be beside the seaside
Cos we all hope to go a glorious brown
But to put the mockers on the fun
There ain't no blinkin' sun
So we pack our bags and head for out of town.

Well we all like to be beside the seaside
Cos we all want to swim in waters blue
But the fact that its not clean
Puts an end to all such dreams
And we pack our bags and head for pastures new.

Well we all like to be beside the seaside
Cos we all want some seaside chips and fish
But the fact that its so greasy
Makes us all feel rather queasy
So we pack our bags and seek a foreign dish.

Well we all like to be beside the seaside
Cos we all like a bit of sticky rock
But the fact it rots our molars
Is not an added bonus
So we pack our bags and overseas we flock.

Well we all like to be beside the seaside
With a kiss me quick and love me slowly hat
But spade and bucket in your hand
Without a golden strand
Means we pack our bags and never once look back.

Well we all like to be beside the seaside
But an English one can never be the same
We've moved ahead so fast
Hi De Hi is in the past
And we pack our bags and head towards the plane.

Well we may all like to be beside the seaside
Cos the sun and sand is where we want to be
But for a little bit of heaven
Don't go to Spain or Devon
Just pack your bags and come on down to
LEIGH.

CAP

FOULNESS HERITAGE CENTRE

We are pleased to advise members that a new heritage centre will open on Foulness from Sunday 4 April and every first Sunday of the month until 3 October between 12 and 4. This looks to be an interesting addition to local history resources being on such an isolated and unusual island. For more details contact the George and Dragon, Foulness.

COP A LOAD OF THIS THE ESSEX POLICE MUSEUM

This is the first in a new series of interesting places to visit in Essex that you may not be aware of.

The Essex Police Museum opened in 1991 with the aims 'to advance the education of the public in the history of Essex in general and in the Essex Police Service in particular by collecting, preserving, interpreting and documenting material, evidence and associated information for the public benefit by the maintenance of a museum for items of historic police interest, and the display and demonstration of such items'.

The museum is based at Police Headquarters in Springfield, Chelmsford and holds archival material relating to the history of the force from 1840, including personnel, disciplinary and other records, together with more general documents and a large photographic record.

Essex was one of the first constabularies formed under the Police Act of 1839 and in 1840 the Essex County Constabulary came into being.

The first chief constable went by the wonderful name of Admiral John Bunch Bonnemaïson McHardy, a retired naval officer and was in charge of the force for 41 years until he retired aged of 81.

Initially there were only 100 constables and 15 superintendents to police the county. The rank of inspector appeared later that year, and in 1855 the rank of sergeant was introduced.

It was 1946 before the first women were appointed constables in Essex, although Colchester had appointed its first full time woman constable in 1925. The dog section was introduced in 1953 and in 1990 the force, by this time known as the Essex Police, had acquired a helicopter.

The Southend-on-Sea County Borough Constabulary was formed on 1st April 1914 at which time the only form of transport they had at their disposal was two horses and three pedal cycles and a privately owned green Humber open top car

The Museum is available for family history enquiries and other research projects and contact can be made with Sarah Ward the Museum Curator on 01245 457150 or by writing to her at Essex Police Museum, PO Box 2, Springfield, Chelmsford, CM2 6DA

For more details about the museum's holdings you can search the web at www.essex.police.uk and click on 'off beat'.

One other thing the museum holds is a number of historical photographs of members of staff and it is here that there is a connection to Leigh.

John Harris Bausor was born in Nottinghamshire in 1811, the son of John Bausor and Phebe Harris. He first became a boy sailor on H.M.S. Buzzard, then by 1831 he was an Able Seaman of H.M.S. Charybdis. When the Essex Constabulary was formed in 1840 he was an Able Seaman on HMS Voyage. His parents later moved to Chelmsford. In the 1841 census they were living in Duke Street, where the father was a "Wine Cellarman."

The Constabulary was looking for good recruits and the 100 constables and 15 superintendents of the original intake were, in 1841, being supplemented by the new rank of inspector. There is evidence that Chief Constable McHardy received a letter of introduction from a former naval colleague of Bausor. After training at Springfield, Constable 5 Bausor received an interesting posting. With only 100 constables to cover the vast

county, the former sailor was sent to the remote island of Foulness.

It may be that this was an indication that McHardy was evolving as a policeman. His experience as a former coastguard must have strongly influenced him. It can be conjectured that he thought smuggling of such importance to the policing of the county that he deployed some men to counter it. The nearest town to Foulness was Rochford. Within a short time Bausor was brought inland to Prittlewell.

On 1st July 1844 Bausor was promoted Inspector and posted to Leigh-on-Sea. A single man in 1841, he then married Margret Ann and began a family. 11 children are recorded to them.

In 1847 a career move took him to Great Dunmow, another to Bocking in 1849. From 1850 to 1855 the family were at Great Chesterford. Inspector Bausor moved to Billericay in 1857. In 1859 came his final posting, to the Dengie Division. It required a commander and there was no apparent intention to appoint a superintendent. Bausor became the inspector at Latchingdon. On 24th April 1861 he died at Purleigh, whilst in service, of a "malignant ulcer of tongue and throat." His wife received a payment of £75, being one year's salary.

The Essex Police Museum holds a photograph of John Harris Bausor which is the earliest known likeness of an Essex Constabulary Officer.

Information in this article is taken with kind permission of Fred Feather from the Essex Police History Notebook and the photograph of John Bausor was supplied by Sarah Ward, Curator of the Essex Police Museum.



John Harris Bausor

According to Fred Feather this photograph helps to confirm a theory that the early police uniforms did not have significant badge distinctions. Rank was indicated by the quality and cut. It is apparent that each rank wore a crown on their collars to denote that their authority came from the Crown. Unfortunately no hat can be seen.

AND FINALLY

Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the particular author and not necessarily those of the committee and officers of the Society.

We rather hope you will like to keep your copy of Leighway but if not please recycle it.

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