



LEIGHWAY

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

HERE WE ARE AGAIN

A happy new year to all our readers. And a momentous year it is for all things maritime with the 200th anniversary of Trafalgar celebrations going on all around the country. We make no apologies for this issue being somewhat Nelsonian.

For the Society this is also an important occasion and we will be mounting a display based on the Nelson theme.

Many of you will have read and indeed taken part in local meetings concerning planning issues in the town. Planning has become the hottest of topics and concerns people greatly. In this edition of Leighway therefore we are taking up some space to tell you about new legislation which is coming on stream concerning planning, licensing, freedom of information and other related topics. We hope you find it interesting and informative.

Leighway goes from strength to strength, and my heartfelt thanks go to all of you who contribute to that success.

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

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.

16 March – Rev John Robinson – East Anglian Magic Lantern Show

20 April (AGM) - Rosemary Arscot - recently donated finds.

23 April - visit to Portsmouth Maritime Centre

7 May – Quiz at the Den

18 May - Living in the Tower of London - Helen Leonard

12 October - Hadleigh Past and Present -Derek Barber

16 November - Walking the Essex Way – John Askew

10 December - Christmas Comicals

A WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

2004 was quite a milestone in the history of the Society. First, in regard to Plumbs Cottage, we have submitted our application to the Lottery Fund. Many hours of research meticulously compiling this tricky document were carried out by Alan Crystal and Carole Pavitt our grateful thanks to both. Keep your fingers crossed for 18 March when our application will be considered.

The Centre also had a change with its fresh display of laminated photographs etc. Anne Price, Elaine Crystal and Jane Lovell were responsible for this great improvement to the Smithy.

School visits were as busy as ever and the slides shown to the children have been improved by John Porter.

Your Committee has commented on planning applications within the Leigh Conservation Areas. David Greenwood, a local architect, has joined our planning Panel recently to add his expertise - a welcome addition.

The Heritage Centre has done well and our thanks go to all the helpers who do a sterling job come rain or shine. We still have need of more helpers particularly on Saturdays and Margaret Buckey will be pleased to hear from anyone who could spare a few hours a week to help out. Special thanks to Joan and Shirley for the excellent range of stock now carried.

Our meetings at Wesley Church as always, have been very successful with varied and interesting speakers, well attended even when the weather has been a trifle inclement.

Ann Price has organised visits to Stratford upon Avon and Docklands which were a great success. Thanks to her and her helper, husband Barry.

Lastly, my thanks to my Committee and Vice Chair Elaine Crystal, and to you all for another year of support for the Society and its important aims for Leigh's future and certainly for maintaining its past history for the public at large.

We look forward to another milestone in 2005 when hopefully Plumbs Cottage, Strand Wharf Public Open Space and the return of the Bawley 'Endeavour' are happily resolved.

A happy new year to you all.

Frank Bentley

YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE

Please send your £6/(£12 overseas) to the Membership Secretary at the Heritage Centre. If you pay by Direct Debit you need do nothing. If you want to pay by Direct Debit in future a form is included in your Leighway.

CHRISTMAS COMICALS

The Comicals was a great success again and raised a considerable sum for the Plumbs appeal. Our thanks go to all those who took part and helped with the arrangements. And of course thanks to the scouts for the use of the Den. Just one example of organisations in the town helping each other.

And for 2005 the theme is a naval one so ahoy all you sailors put on your thinking caps and lets have some volunteers to do a turn, singing, reciting and comedy are the order of the day.

YOU CHUCKED OUT THE CHINTZ

The Table Sale in aid of Plumbs Cottage raised £345 and was a great success.

It went a long way to prove that one man's rubbish is another man's treasure.

UPDATING YOU

Thanks to Alex Fleming for his response to Trevor Kirby's article about 2nd Wesley Scout Group. Alex too was a member of the Group and also knew Mrs Kittridge well through Sunday School. Alex also remembers the Scoutmaster, Harry Gidley and other troupers included Alan Lockett and Cyril Robinson, Owen and Denis Rawlings and Vic Langford. Sadly both Denis and Vic were killed in the War and Owen died shortly afterwards. Tom Partridge's wife was Peggy, Rose was her maiden name. Alex remembers they went to camp at Danbury. Obviously a very happy time.

If anyone has any photos of the Group at the time it would be really nice to put them in the next edition.

PLUMBS RESTORATION

The lottery bid is to be considered by the Lottery Board on 18 March so everyone fingers crossed.

Regardless of the bid we have to keep the momentum up with regard to fund raising, so if anyone has any bright ideas for different ways to raise money please get in touch with Carole or any other member of the Committee.

During the course of the year we managed to purchase a Victorian cooking range for the cottage.

PAYING THROUGH THE STOMACH

Many thanks goes to Jan Surcliffe who held a dinner party to raise funds for Plumbs and raised £100. The Plumbs fund now stands at well over £10,400.

TO SEE OURSELVES AS OTHERS SEE US

We thought readers might like to see a selection of the comments left in the visitors' book at the Heritage Centre. All complimentary and showing what a valuable resource the Centre is and the success of which is down to the many helpers who give up their time to help in the Centre and look after the visiting public and school groups. They all deserve a great big thank you.

Very interesting, a worthwhile venture.

Lovely to see the Old Town recorded so well.

Fascinating for someone returning after many years.

Interesting place to bring visiting parents. It takes them back.

Thanks for the memory - - what a collection.

Good to see restoration. Glad you survived the fire.

Nice to see someone else keeping traditions alive.

A haven revisited.

Got just what I wanted, and friendly staff too.

Wonderful to be back after 62 years - - remarkably unchanged.

Steeped in history.

We can be proud of our history.

Give them a grant! !

I liked the kitchen best, but glad I did not have to cook on that stove.

An Aussie visitor wrote "wonderful chat, thanks Donald"

The Council should ensure the preservation of this interesting heritage.

Hope you get the funding you deserve.

I learnt things I did not know about Leigh.

I met so many lovely people in this spot - Thank you so much.

Most interesting. Worthy of investment.

Leigh is full of surprises. Good to recharge batteries.

Must be supported. Leigh History is in good hands.

Lovely to see there are still people who appreciate the way

things used to and still should be done.

I liked the Long Johns.

Delightful to look at the past but live in the present.

Better each time I come - reminded me of mum's kitchen.

A perfect location to display a wealth of history.

Obviously a lot of hard work has been put into this.

A treasure house of interest.

CAN WE HELP?

Mara Cottrell of Billericay is producing a photographic book on the history of Basildon New Town. A bit out of our area but who knows you may be able to help her.

The book will chronicle the last 100 years of Basildon, Vange, Pitsea, Laindon, Langdon Hills and the surrounding area and will show how these places have emerged from fields and farms and changed almost beyond recognition to the bustling communities we know today.

Mara is keen to borrow old photographs and material such as adverts, programmes and tickets over the last century. She is particularly interested in the war years and the 50s and 60s. Pictures of buildings, families, social clubs, sports, schools, theatre, industry and local businesses would all be of interest to Mara.

If anyone thinks they can help Mara she can be contacted on 01277 631329 or e-mail mara@cottrell.eclipse.co.uk.

ENGLAND EXPECTS

As I am sure all of you know this year is the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar and whilst Leigh cannot make any great claims to connections to the Battle in 1935 an article appeared in a local paper about a remarkable find in Old Leigh. Mr Otto Vogelsang carried out a marine engineering business in disused cottages near the cockle sheds.

In June 1935 Mr Vogelsang found a cellar below the sea level in the cottages, obviously used for smuggling, and after stripping off about 12 layers of wallpaper near the entrance he discovered oak panelling covering the entire walls of the room thought to be over 300 years old.

The Cottage had previously been occupied by Edric Brewer the grocer who had been born there. Mr Brewer was interviewed at the time of the discovery and told the reporter that his father Samuel had formerly occupied the cottages. He said he knew all about the cellar. He and his brother used to go down into it but it could not be used for anything because the water came up at every high tide. Samuel dug a hole in the corner to try and drain it but it did not work.

Among the finds was a truncheon which Mr Brewer suspected belonged to his grandfather who had lived in the house next door.

Samuel Brewer was a butcher and the houses were originally all one house possibly owned by an Osborne. Samuel built his shop and the slaughterhouse behind it and divided the buildings off into 4 tenements.

A month later, in July 1935 Mr Vogelsang made some more interesting discoveries and this is where the Nelson connection comes in. His newest find was a concealed cupboard behind the panelling. In the cellar under the stairs he found a commemorative medal of the death of Nelson bearing the names of his victories and the date of Trafalgar. There were also 2 cannonballs, one as large as a grapefruit and the other the size of a tennis ball.

We have two such sized cannonballs in the Heritage Centre. Young visitors are fascinated by these and amazed at how heavy they are.

Interestingly one of Leigh's characters, Golden Thompson, may very well have served at Trafalgar and lived in the Old Town so perhaps he was a regular visitor to Brewer's the butcher.

Mr Brewer the butcher



EBB TIDE

Ebb tide
'birdie tide',
saltmarsh all dry
Boat keels on ground
all standing 'cant igh'
Fish running down rills to the creek –
A chance for an astute angler to seek.
The creek bed is full,
water surging to Clamshell Bend
Boats pointing westward with mooring chains tight,
tide chuckling
Along their clencher built landes.
A lone cockler bawley stems its way through the tide –
To the sheds to unload before dark.
Sea birds await banks to uncover,
with a view to feed before roosting
Ashore, all is quiet twilight bathed in misty hoar,
clouding window lights yellow ...
fisher folk home to their supper
The tide is low and darkness increased –
ending another day in the life of Leigh Creek.

Frank Bentley

ENGLAND EXPECTED – AND LEIGH DID ITS DUTY

Elsewhere in Leighway Clare Harvey has written an interesting article about Lord Nelson's possible connections to Leigh and in a previous edition we learned about the possible involvement of Golden Thompson at the Battle of Trafalgar. Well there is another connection which fortunately is documented in St Clement's Church.

On the First Centenary of the Battle in 1905 the four surviving sons of Captain W H Brand who is buried in St Clement's placed a stone in the Church to record their father's involvement in the battle.

At the time Captain Brand was a Midshipman on HMS Revenge a 74 gun third rater Commanded by Captained by RN Moorsom.

The History of St Clement's records that through the ten years of almost ceaseless warfare following Trafalgar Captain Brand bore a gallant part in many dangerous engagements and enterprises, distinguishing himself, by devotion to duty, daring and seamanship worthy of England's naval traditions.

He entered the Navy on 18 May 1805 and after the Battle he was engaged in the batteries and gun boats in the gut of Gibraltar when he was taken prisoner by a Spanish flotilla.

In the period of his country's greatest struggle Captain Brand's father, Alexander, formerly in the Navy, gave four other sons to her service, one to the military and three to the naval forces. Of the latter Lieutenant George Rowley Brand, lost his life in action in 1806, under circumstances publicly recognised as of heroic gallantry, going down on HMS Unique which he commanded, with colours flying and himself covered with twenty severe wounds.

LICENSING ACT 2003

On 10 July 2003 the Licensing Act 2003 gained Royal Assent. Now that may seem like some time ago but the majority of the provisions of the Act have still to come into force. Many of you may have read about the provisions of the Act at that time – but time and distance dull the memory and also lull you into a sense of false security. So here is a short resume of the provisions of the Act

One big change in terms of the administration of the system is that it now becomes a council function whereas before it was dealt with by local justices. As of 7 February Southend Borough Council is the licensing authority.

The key measures of the Act are –

- *Flexible opening hours with the potential for 24 hour opening, seven days a week subject to consideration of the impact on local residents, businesses and expert authorities on licensing issues.*
- *Single premises licences which cover alcohol, entertainment and late night refreshment, applications will be subject to police scrutiny. Local residents and businesses will be able to make representations on applications.*
- *Personal licences which will allow a licence holder to move more freely between premises. These licences will be subject to police scrutiny if the applicant has certain convictions.*

The Government has also stated what it sees as the main benefits of the Act –

- *It will help reduce the problems of disorder and disturbance associated with 'chucking out' time by spreading the time period for people leaving premises. When submitting an application, applicants will also have to submit an operating schedule which will include hours of opening.*

[You could of course be forgiven for thinking that spreading the time when people leave premises merely spreads the time for disruption and effect on amenity throughout the night. So be warned if you are concerned about an application but do not put pen to paper and make a relevant representation, the hours of operation granted will be those requested by the applicant. If no objections are made the Council must grant the licence.]

- *It will provide a boost to the tourism and leisure industry and help us compete with Europe.*
- *Cutting the red tape should save the industry £197 billion in the first 10 years.*
- *Provides greater scope for further development of live music, dancing and theatre.*
- *It gives local residents and businesses a say.*

Over the last few years we have seen a great increase in Leigh in late night drinking and eating establishments, so much so there have been requests to the Council to call a halt to granting them planning permission.

Licensing is concerned with the fitness of the operator and detailed issues concerning the operation and management of the premises that are not addressed by the planning process which relates to the use of the premises.

A licensing committee may refuse to grant a licence following representations from the local planning authority if the:

- activity sought to be licensed would amount to an unlawful use of the premises in planning terms; or
- hours being sought exceed those authorised by any planning permission.

It will be for the applicant to demonstrate any special circumstances to justify a departure from this.

So if you feel that you have a valid reason for objecting to a new proposal for licensing of premises or a new development or change of use of a premises you should make your views known at both the planning and licensing stages. Or if it is a licence for an already established venue keep an eye out for any licensing application.

The problem of alcohol and particularly anti social behaviour was considered by a recent meeting in Southend of community groups and the police which our Secretary attended. Sadly, she was only able to report that the Police are so stretched dealing with the influx of potential trouble to Southend seafront that any incidents in Leigh are well at the back of the queue.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 has introduced, for the first time in the UK, a universal right of access to official information. The Act came into force for all public sector organisations on 1 January 2005. Members of the public now have statutory rights of access to recorded information held by public authorities, including central and local government. The objectives behind this right of access are to increase transparency, to help widen public participation in the processes of government and to help achieve better-documented and more rigorous decision-making and thereby make public authorities more accountable.

- The Act will apply to information held by an authority whenever it came to hold that information;
- in response to a request for information, an authority must, in general, state whether or not it holds that information and, if so, it must disclose the information to the person making the request;
- the maker of the request need not have any reason for requesting the information or demonstrate any interest in the matter it covers;

The Act does not allow access to certain types of information such as information relating to security issues and information accepted as being provided "in confidence".

There will be no charge to the requester for information that costs local authorities less than £450 to produce; for central government, the cost ceiling will be £600.

There are several categories of exempt information which cannot be obtained under the Act, the main ones are -

Information accessible by another means.
Information intended for future publication
Commercial confidentiality

PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

This Act has also hit the statute books recently. It is an update of the 1990 Planning Act and contains several major changes to the planning system.

The Government's aim is to speed up the planning system and there are changes in the way Councils are required to produce policy documents.

The Act aims to give the public more say in planning matters and Councils are required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement to set out their strategy for the involvement of the public in the planning process.

The time period within which a planning permission must be implemented is reduced from 5 to 3 years although councils have the discretion to extend this period.

Ironically in an attempt to speed up the system Government reduced the time for appeal against a refusal of permission to 3 months instead of the usual 6. This has created such a backlog of appeals at the Planning Inspectorate that the Government have had to temporarily revert to the 6 month period.

ACCESS TO PLANNING INFORMATION

The Freedom of Information Act does not cover public right of access to information which is made available by other means. This will normally include information which is provided under the terms of another law of which there are many.

Sometimes an authority might claim that they cannot provide a copy of material they hold because they do not own the copyright. The Government recently published "Making the planning system accessible to everyone: Good-practice guidance on access to and charging for planning information" this states –

Members of the public have the right to ask for a copy of a planning document to inspect elsewhere, under the same legislation that says documents must be available for inspection. The copyright rules for planning documents are set out in the Copyright (Material Open to Public Inspection) (Making of Copies of Plans) Order 1989, as amended. Any copyright of material which is available for the public to see as a statutory right is not broken by making a copy so that someone can read the documents at a more convenient place and time.

Local Government (Access To Information) Act 1985

This Act applies to all principal councils and provides the public and press with access to meetings and connected papers of the full council, its committees and subcommittees, unless "confidential" or "exempt" information is likely to be disclosed.

Admission to Meetings

Meetings of the council are normally to be open to the public but they can be excluded if "confidential information" would be disclosed to them. What is confidential is laid down in the Act and generally speaking there should be very little if any planning information which is confidential.

Agendas, reports and minutes

The public may inspect the agenda of meetings and reports of the council. The minutes of council, committee and subcommittee meetings are also open to inspection by the public. The public can also inspect "background papers" to reports which are made available to the public. Background papers are those which disclose any facts or matters on which, in the opinion of the Council, the report, or an important part of the report, is based and have, in the officer's opinion, been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report. These should be listed in the report.

Planning Information

The local planning authority is required to keep a register of planning applications for public inspection. This means that you can go to the Council offices and look at any planning application which is being considered by the Council and you can also look at the planning history of a property and obtain copies of any decisions affecting it, there will be a charge for copies.

If you want to look at either an application or a history it is a good idea to phone the Council in advance to get information on opening times and charges.

Some of you may have heard of Section 106 or Section 52 agreements. These are agreements under the Planning Act where the applicant agrees to do certain things if he gets planning permission, i.e. highway improvements. Nowadays this information should also be in the planning register but this was not always the case so it is as well to ask at the planning office whether there are any agreements relating to the site.

RECENT PLANNING

As members know the Committee of the Society is a consultee on all applications within the Leigh Conservation Areas, which now includes the new Chapmanslord Conservation Area. We are also urging the Council to reconstitute on a regular basis the Conservation Area Working Party which is vital in terms of keeping a careful eye on development in the Conservation Areas.

We have dealt with several applications recently affecting the Conservation Areas and in particular in the Old Town proposals for an extension of the Boatyard Restaurant. The proposals were to use the proposed but as yet unbuilt, ground floor retail units as reception/dining area, food preparation area and storage and the proposed first floor residential as offices and staff facilities ancillary to the restaurant.

We were very concerned about this proposal and objected for the following reasons –

- Loss of residential and retail premises. The inclusion of these uses was welcomed as reinstating to the Old Town uses which had been in the original building on this site. The loss of such uses makes a mockery of the stated aims of the development to enhance the vitality of the Old Town and will create a 'dead frontage' to the High Street.
- The extension of the restaurant will further exacerbate the traffic conditions in the Old Town. We already suffer very large lorries delivering to the premises, parking indiscriminately and blocking pavements and causing a traffic hazard in one of the narrowest parts of the High Street. The proposal will also increase the customer traffic

generated by the restaurant. Again this traffic, often driven at dangerous speeds, will increase the dangers to the many visitors to the Old Town and detract further from its charm and ambience.

- Further an additional door has been inserted in the frontage leading directly to a storage area. We object most strongly to this as it will further encourage large vehicles to park for deliveries creating a traffic hazard.

We also objected to a proposal at Flat 2, Leigh House for the erection of a roof extension to east elevation with French doors and roof terrace which was considered unacceptable in that it destroyed the symmetry and integrity of this important building within the conservation area and the roof terrace would overlook The Gardens to the detriment of those properties and public open space. The Borough Council has refused this application.

A Poem of Leigh

The following poem comes from the Heritage Centre archives . It was written by Miss D Groves of Northampton in 1994 following a visit to Leigh

*In shades of blue and grey, with mottled flecks of gold,
the rolled and well rubbed cobblestones make up the old town
road
Paved and rounded by strolling feet and hooves,
Which old cartwheels had worn and ground and grooved.*

*Threaded 'tween the eaves and doors it reaches out of sight,
by quiet dusty sheds, so seldom raped by light.
The warm and busy cafe, serving drinks and simple fare,
from which the smell of toast and tea, invades the quiet air.*

*The sounds of cheer for beer and liquor from within the local
pubs,
in smoke filled rooms on polished tans a leather elbow rubs.
With bottles brown, on dusty trays and old wood stocks to sit
on,
whilst clear or gold, the optics old, into oblivion beckon.*

*The wooden walls all dressed in white, with flowers fair and
pretty
and round behind the railway lines stretch far into the city.
Rushing past, the trains run fast, in colours bold and bright,
where once they smoked and steamed and spat fire into the
night.*

*And all around, the air abounds the seas salt watery smells,
as with wave and eddy and rhythm steady, she laps upon the
shells
The golden sand of one small beach, on which the waters flow
where once a small boy ran and played, near thirty years ago.*

*Far out afloat the cockle boat chugs slowly through the sea,
the tired crew, with fingers blue, think only of their tea.
Whilst all the time the evening sun, sinking slowly low,
fills all around on sea and ground with a rich and golden glow*

*So as I stand and gaze around, the scene's all but replete,
for only, but for you my love, the picture is complete.*

ORANGES AND LEMONS WE'RE LOSING ST CLEMENT'S

Many of you will have read in the local press that for financial reasons St Clement's Hall is to be sold and will close at the end of the year.

The 80 year old hall has been a local venue for many groups within the town and indeed the Leigh Society recently held its table sale there.

It was as a result of that table sale that Stuart Brewer commented that his parents who married in 1925 and were the first couple to hold their reception at the new Hall. And here they are

The wedding of Walker Brewer and Emily Worsfold



BABY FARMING

Whilst flicking through some old copies of local newspapers I came across a report of two women who had been arrested for baby farming in Westcliff. The paper was World War One.

Baby-farming was a term used in Victorian England for the taking in of an infant for a small payment, with an understanding that nursing care would be provided. Illegitimacy, and its attendant stigma, were the usual reason why desperate woman resorted to this horrendous practice. It was more profitable for the infant to die, since the small payment could not cover the care of the child. Some women were caught murdering these children and several were hanged. The obtained the children by placing adverts in local papers such as this one –

*NURSE CHILD WANTED, OR TO ADOPT—The
Advertiser, a Widow with a little family of her own, and a
moderate allowance from her late husband's friends,
would be glad to accept the charge of a young child. Age
no object. If sickly would receive a parent's care. Terms,
Fifteen Shillings a month; or would adopt entirely if
under two months for the small sum of Twelve pounds.*

In the Westcliff case the police had found knotted stockings and straps used to ill treat the children. The two women, Lydia Goldsworthy and Florrie Peak of Inverness Avenue were summoned for having ill-treated and neglected a number of children.

WELLS NEXT THE SEA

English journalist, novelist, and critic Rebecca West is perhaps best-known for her reports on the Nuremberg trials (1945-46). She started her career as a columnist for the suffragist weekly the *Freewoman* in the 1910s. Kenneth Tynan described her in 1954 as "the best journalist alive". West's companion for ten years was H.G. Wells. Their son Anthony also established himself as a noted author and critic.

In late February 1917 Rebecca West moved to Leigh-on-Sea in Essex. She took possession of a house, "Southcliffe" (28 Marine Parade), on 9th March in a snowstorm, with no coal or gas, and the pipes frozen.

On Marine Parade the house had a magnificent view of the Thames Estuary. The new arrangement pleased Rebecca as she watched the blinds being put up and arranged the curtains. She saw a great deal of Sally Tugander and liked walking with her on the sea wall. She continued her peripatetic schedule - shuttling back and forth to London for teas, dinners, films, and facial massages.

Nearly three years old, Anthony played on his scooter, running on the Promenade and enjoying the public garden across from his house. He delighted in a spacious world of lawns and bowling greens. A main walk took him out to the bluff above old gunfire, and a bomb fell about seventy yards from Leigh, where he enjoyed looking at the estuary's expanse.

In spite of the beautiful surroundings, a bored Rebecca pined for HG. Zeppelins flew overhead, contributing to her growing nervousness, although at first she and Anthony welcomed the excitement.

28 - 30 September 1917 three more air-raids in quick succession, four hours of constant Rebecca's house. From the Promenade, Anthony saw a field with a bomb crater and dead cows. A battery of anti-aircraft guns jarred the house at night with their slamming concussions.

Rebecca resolved that he should be moved to London, where the bombs had not yet reached".

Rebecca was a celebrated feminist who once said of that 'label'

I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist



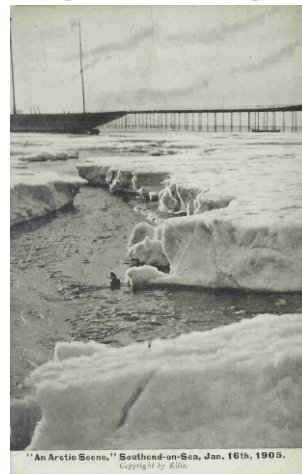
whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat.

H G Wells – Anthony's father

WHITHER THE WEATHER

One hundred years ago on 16 January 1905 the estuary was gripped in a ferocious winter. This is a picture of what is called 'An Arctic Scene' taken at Southend on that day. We certainly have not had icy weather like that for many a year in these parts but if the snow/ice was this thick out at Southend what must it have been like further up the estuary?

We have all heard of the famous Frost Fairs on the River Thames which took place in centuries past. This came about



because in those days the river was wider and the bridges were on much larger pillars and narrower arches, which restricted the waterflow so ice formed more easily.

In 1063 the Thames froze for 14 weeks and in 1434, it froze from London Bridge to Gravesend between 24 November and 10 February. In 1515 carriages or carts were able to be driven across the river.

The first record of a Frost Fair was in 1564 when dancing and archery were held on the ice.

In 1683, there was a "a greate frost" and by January 1684, booths were set up on the river because the ice was so thick. People were able to cross the river on foot to walk through the streets of booths selling all kinds of wares and a whole ox roasted on the ice. There was horse racing, bull baiting and many other activities creating a carnival on the Thames.

During the winter of 1739-40 there was the Great Frost which started on Christmas Day and lasted until 17 February. Later in the century, in 1788, the Thames was frozen for seven weeks. As well as the usual attractions of previous Frost Fairs, there was a Wild Beast Show.

The last Great Frost Fair was held in the winter of 1813-14. When the watermen, who were losing income because of the inability to use the river started charging people for entering the fair by breaking the ice near the banks so people needed them to help them cross.

The frost fairs ended when the flow of the river was increased by the demolition of the old London Bridge and the opening of the new London Bridge in 1831.

NELSON'S 'LEGACY' TO LEIGH A 200 YEAR MYSTERY

I never cease to wonder at coincidence or is it synchronicity?

One dark December day I opened a Christmas card from an ancient Harvey relative. Inside he said that he had not managed much more on the family tree this year but was thinking of the 200th anniversary of Trafalgar and our old captain Eliab Harvey, Captain of the Temeraire. He added that Eliab had attended a splendid dinner in celebration of the victory in spite of the sad loss of Nelson.

The same evening I looked at my e-mails and Carole Pavitt had requested me to write a small article for Leighway on Nelson's alleged Leigh connections with the Joscelyne family.

I suppose something should be said of both families because when I stand on Leigh marshes walking my dogs I look east knowing that my Joscelynes owned the land from beside the Leigh Church up as far as Avenue Road, from the Broadway to the sea. To the west my Harveys worked Castle Farm at Hadleigh, plus Park Farm and Leigh Heath Farm with its sawpits supplying Leigh, (burnt down in 1938). My roots and connections are firmly here in Leigh.

Eliab was a descendant of Sir Thomas Harvey of Folkestone (father of the famous Sir William who discovered the circulation of the blood). He is buried in Hempstead near Finchingfield in north Essex. Later in life he became a member of King's Counsel and MP for Greenwich, but sadly his line died out with him in 1830 (his sons, William and Edward, both having died fighting the French at Burgos). If we look at naval records for Trafalgar we find that just at the crucial time, when things were at their worst, the Temeraire came in to save the



Eliab Harvey

day.

On the Joscelyne side of course there is the well known tale in Leigh that my Great Great Great Grandmother, Mary Joscelyne, nee Woodward, a midwife, of Joscelyne Square, Leigh attended the secret birth of a girlchild to Emma Hamilton.

This seems even more likely when we know more of Mary's history.

She was born in 1762 at Barling Hall to William Woodward and his wife Elizabeth, nee Osborne. Of their 5 children Mary and her brother James were sole survivors. William died in 1769 leaving his widow Elizabeth with the two children aged 7 and 2. In 1772 Elizabeth married Christopher Parsons of The Lawns in North Shoebury (now Alleyne Court School) so the children were brought up there with Christopher's daughter.

In 1779 Mary married John Joscelyne, a blacksmith from White Notley who moved to Leigh to set up shop. This marriage was a joint ceremony with her step father Christopher Parsons and

John Joscelyne's sister (also Elizabeth). So her stepfather became her brother in law. It is said that Mary and John met at the May Fair at St Clement's.

Her brother James was an adventurer and went to sea sailing on many a ship and even being court martialled on The Lion. Eventually he ended up as Second Lieutenant to Nelson.

Nelson was an unconventional man both in his ways in battle and in his love life. He could be difficult, which sometimes resulted in him being laid up on shore without a ship for years, but he was much loved by the common seamen. He was a ladies man in spite of being somewhat delicate of build.

Having lost his mother at the tender age of 9 and gone to sea under the auspices of his uncle, Captain Maurice Suckling at the age of 13, I wonder if he felt the need of a mother figure in his 'ladies'.

After several passionate affairs he eventually married a young widow, Fanny, in the West Indies. They married in 1787. In 1793 he first met Sir William Hamilton and his wife Emma in Naples. Emma was born Emma Hart in 1762, the daughter of a Cheshire blacksmith.. They remained in close touch by letter for some years until eventually, once the Hamiltons returned to England Nelson and Emma became lovers.

Their union resulted in the birth of a daughter, Horatia, in 1801. To hide her parentage a sailor called Thompson (sometimes Tomson) was invented as the father of the child and the baby was put in the care of a Mrs Gibson.

It is known that Emma was again pregnant in the spring of 1804. She often spent time at the Royal Terrace in Southend. Her condition was once again hidden but legend has it that Mary Joscelyne was taken in a covered carriage to the Lawns and there, with the help of a ship's surgeon, delivered Emma of a child baptised Emma Seacole after the surgeon.

The child is said to have died (although registered at St Mary's). What more logical than James Woodward should offer a safe haven for his master's secret child in the house where he and Mary had been brought up. Plus the services of his sister, a trained midwife, who would keep quiet.

Mary's daughter Charlotte wrote a diary in which she said her father had a secret that he would tell on his deathbed. Sadly she records that he walked across Hadleigh Fields in the noonday sun, his blood turning to water, he died out of his mind and could not tell.

Could his secret have been that the child was fostered by the Joscelynes in White Notley where we have an Emma crop up in the spring of 1804? Hamilton Joscelynes then come down through the family tree. As a family of blacksmiths was there a network up and down the country and did the family also know the Harts, because there are Harts as well as Thompsons. Or was the secret about the illusive James Woodward who was sent to France as a spy and spent 2 years languishing in a French gaol before escaping with vital information for the Lords at the Admiralty. Or his 200 gold guineas well hid, worth at current rates £10,000 James disappears from naval records (thought dead) in 1810. He surfaces in Sackets Quay (America) in 1812 where he takes another wife. I am not sure that the wife here was dead. He then goes on to have 5 children in the New World and establish a line there.

Yes in this anniversary year I shall certainly be pondering on unsolved family mysteries.

Clare Harvey (nee Joscelyne)

**IF YOU WANT TO ENSURE THAT YOU
CONTINUE TO RECEIVE LEIGHWAY DON'T
FORGET YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE LEIGH
SOCIETY ARE DUE NOW**

LOOKING FOR MARY HAYES

One of our activities on the day of the Old Leigh Regatta is to sell second hand books. Not many people can resist a secondhand book stall. Last Regatta was no different and despite a stiff breeze we set up shop. There are a couple of other bookstalls in the Old Town on that day and we all tried to help each other. And so we at the Heritage Centre were regularly receiving armfuls of books from other vendors to get rid of.

In amongst one such pile was a hardbacked notebook. Old but unused. And stuck between its pages was this beautiful certificate. A little tatty round the edges and spotted with age but clear in its inscription and picture.

We would very much like to return this to either its rightful owner or a descendant and we wonder if anyone can help.

The Certificate is presented to Mary Hayes on the occasion of her First Holy Communion on 8 December 1925 at Our Lady of Lourdes, Leigh-on-Sea.

If anyone knows Mary or her family please get in touch with Carole via the Heritage Centre and hopefully we can reunite the certificate with its rightful family.



A SOUTHEND MURDER

In 1894, a man named James Canham Read was arrested in Rose Cottage, Mitcham in Surrey for the murder of one of his mistresses, Florrie Dennis. Read was subsequently hanged for his crime. The murder weapon, a revolver, was never found and popular belief had it that the killer threw it down a well inside the house where it has lain ever since.

James Canham Read became known as the Southend murderer

James Canham Read was handsome, charming and a ladies' man. In 1892 he was involved with three women. As well as his wife in Stepney (with whom he had eight children), he was having one affair with Miss Florence Dennis and another with Miss Beatrice Kempton.

Unfortunately, Beatrice fell pregnant in October 1893. Unable to marry her, Read somehow persuaded her to live with him as

"Mr and Mrs Edgar Benson". Their baby was born in January 1894, and early that year they rented a bed-sitting room in Rose Cottage in Mitcham.

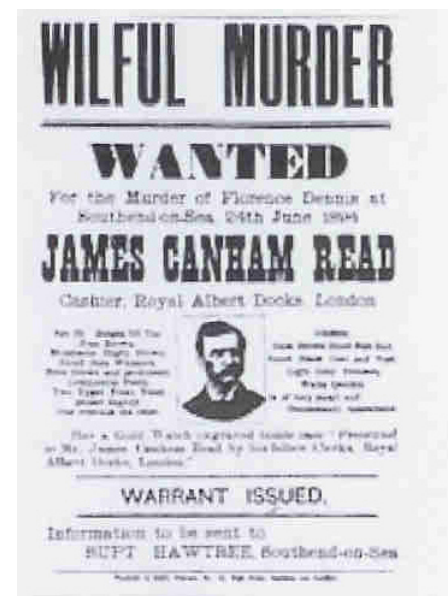
But Read's triple life was crippling him. He was spending a fortune travelling, entertaining Florrie, maintaining one real wife and one pretend wife, and feeding and clothing a total of nine children. Then, to make matters worse, he learned that Florrie was pregnant too!

Florrie's shocked mother sent her away to live with her sister, Mrs Louisa Ayriss, at Wesley Road, Southend. (Presumably, her mother did not know that Read had had an affair with Louisa as well, several years before!). Once there, Florrie sent Read a telegram, asking what arrangements he would be making for her. More money worries! Florrie's fate was sealed. The local press reported the murder saying that on the evening of 24th June 1894 Florrie met Read, who was a clerk employed at the Royal Albert Docks. The couple were observed talking very earnestly as they walked up Sallendines Lane (Hamlet Court Road North) and also in Prittlewell. From that time they were not seen together again but late on the following Monday Florrie's body was found in Prittlewell Brook. It looked as if she had been shot whilst walking and then thrown in the water. An inquest was held at the Blue Boar Hotel and the jury, after two sittings, returned a verdict of wilful murder against Read. Read, however, could not be found. He had left his employment in the Docks taking over £100 with which he had been entrusted to pay wages.

For a fortnight nothing was found of him but on 7th July, Inspector Baker of Scotland Yard's CID and Detective Sergeant Marden of the Essex Constabulary arrested Read in Mitcham where he had been living with Beatrice under the name of Benson.

He was brought to Southend that evening and the following Monday appeared before a special sitting of the Borough Bench. The prosecution conducted the case with skill and sagacity and were met by a rigorous defence. Read had a cheerful demeanour and easy confidence. Sensation upon sensation followed when Read's romantic entanglements were revealed.

Special editions of the Southend Standard were eagerly snapped up. In the end the jury took just half an hour to find him guilty. James Canham Read was hanged at Springfield Prison in Chelmsford on 4 December 1894.



CHARACTERS OF OLD LEIGH



James Samuel 'Chaser' Cotgrove - an English fisherman

Beyond Leigh Railway Station (in 1926), but between the line and the water was a happy little home with the name, Irene Cottage, over the door. Here lived Mr and Mrs James Samuel Cotgrove.

James never had any real schooling but went – when he felt like it – to one of the old-fashioned Dame schools. Consequently, he started work very young. One of his first jobs was in connection with the making of brandy snaps which he used to go out and sell. Then he worked at Southend digging potatoes and at the age of 9 he started going on fishing trips.

As a lad he had been given a ride on a railway engine – a great adventure. The construction had just started on the railway into Southend and it passed right by James' house. An engine used to bring ballast down and James was once given a ride to Benfleet and back.

When he grew up James built a bawley and for forty years toiled on the water until the fishing industry became less lucrative. For the next 20 years he worked with his own rowing boat and during the whole of that 60 years he never met with an accident.

James was a deacon of the Union Congregational Church which commenced at the public hall in 1897. Two years later an iron church was opened in Oakleigh Park Drive. This was moved over a period of three days by a traction engine to Pall Mall.

When interviewed by the Southend Telegraph in 1926 James said 'I never started smoking in seventy seven years. I never knew exactly when I was born until I made special enquiries. I knew my name of course. My birthday is on May 22nd, I believe – its either that or the 28th – the first one – I think.'

'If any fellow gets a wife such as mine is, he'll be lucky. We've been married fifty years and we get on fine. You won't get anyone to look after a man like she has done.'

The interviewer ended his piece by saying 'I could not help thinking how few the men are with his vitality and strength and also his years'

James said he had never had a serious illness nor touched whiskey but three times, and then for medicine.'

James wife was Sarah Mead who came from Eastwood.

ROUND AND ABOUT HAWKWELL

In the 1760s Rev Philip Morant suggested that the name Hawkwell came logically from hawk and well, or spring, although Benton in 1867 thought it derived from the German Hochwell or the High Well. There were indeed two wells in the Parish. A further explanation is that the name in fact comes from the Saxon words for 'bend in the stream'. The Domesday Book mentions the Parish as Hacuella or Hechuella, and the Saxon for bend or hook was 'haca'. Haca-wiella was probably the name of the stream and hawk probably came later due to confusion with the bird name. Through the ages the name was variously written as Hakewell, Hawkeswelle and Hawkewell.

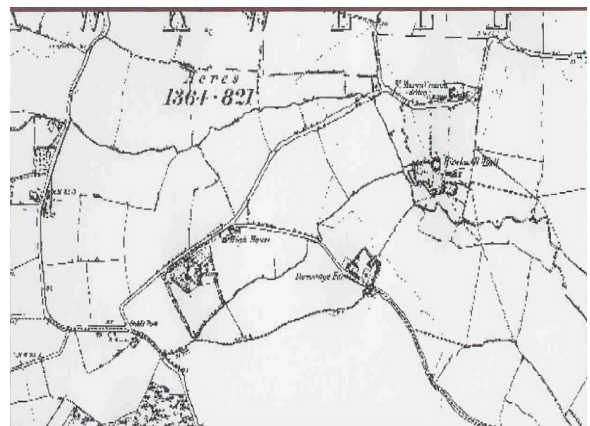
The present Parish was divided in the 13th century into the Manors of Clements Hall and Hawkwell Hall. The former took its name from a family to whom it belonged, Philip Clement owned it in 1440.

Benton estimated that St. Mary-the-Virgin Parish dated from about 1400 but some think it much older, probably about 1300. The little wooden belfry (as it is called in ancient records) had three bells, as recorded in 1757, but in 1768 there were two and in 1849 can be read 'ther remanythe at thys p'sent tyme in the churche of Hawkwell ... one bell in the stepyll'. In an inventory of church goods taken in the reign of Edward VI it is recorded that Sir William Stafford forcibly carried off the bells of Rochford, Ashingdon, South Shoebury, Hawkwell and Foulness, and sold them for his own benefit.

In 1884 the Rev. James Montagu recorded that swarms of bees had taken up residence on either side of the Church Porch for many years and had frequently stung several of the congregation. Several of the weather boards were taken out and the bees destroyed and it was decided to rebuild the porch.

In the early hours of Sunday, 15th September, 1940, considerable damage was done to the church by a bomb. It was at the time of the Harvest Thanksgiving Festival and the services had to be carried on in the churchyard.

The White Hart was the only Public House in the Parish but, sadly, owing to parish boundary changes, it is now officially in Hockley Parish.



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FAREWELL TO A HERO

We make no apologies for concentrating on Lord Nelson this issue, he was and remains one of our great heroes. The outpouring of grief at the time of his death and the return of his body to England after the Battle of Trafalgar were major events in the life of the nation. As befitting a hero he was given a good send off. Resplendent funeral finery and no expense spared. The following is the official description of his funeral.

On Saturday January 5th the Painted Hall of Greenwich Hospital was, for the first time, opened for the inspection of the public, and the body of the ever to be lamented hero, Lord Nelson was laid out in state. At ten o'clock near 10,000 people had assembled in the court yards of the Hospital, anxious for admittance to the Painted Hall, but an order from Lord Hood, the Governor of Greenwich Hospital, was issued stating, that admittance could not be obtained until after the return of the Pensioners from prayer, which would be at 11.

The Greenwich Volunteers were placed in a line, in order to keep the peace, and the River Fencibles were stationed close to the entrance to the Painted Hall. All the ships in the river had their flags lowered half mast, as well as every steeple on shore which displayed the British Ensign. On Wednesday morning, the 8th of January, an immense crowd was assembled on all the Strand, and every vessel and place in Greenwich, to take a last farewell of his mortal remains. The vessels down the river were half mast high, and the procession had a truly grand appearance. The wharfs and docks, and London, Blackfriars and Westminster Bridges were crowded beyond description. The number of them, following in the order of procession, gave an appearance of grandeur to distant observers that has never been exceeded.

On Wednesday the 8th of January 1806 at ten o'clock in the morning, the several persons hereafter mentioned, attended the remains from Greenwich to Whitehall Stairs, assembling first at the Governor's House, within the Royal Hospital at Greenwich; and soon afterwards proceeding in the barges, according to the following order: viz

FIRST BARGE

covered with black cloth - Drums - two trumpets, with their banners, in the steerage, the standard at the head. The Guidon at the doorplace. Each barge by a captain and supported by two lieutenants of the Royal Navy in their full uniform coats, with black waistcoats, breeches and stockings and crape around their arms and hats. Two pursuivants of arms in close mourning with their tabards over their cloaks and hatbands and scarves. Some servants of the deceased in mourning.

SECOND BARGE

covered with black cloth Four trumpets in the steerage.

THIRD BARGE

Covered in black velvet the top adorned with plumes of black feathers and in the centre upon four shields of the arms of the deceased joining in part a Viscount's Coronet, three bannerolls of the family lineage of the deceased, on each side affixed to the external parts of the barge. Six trumpets with their banners as before in the steerage. Six Lieutenants of the Royal Navy habited as those in the other barges, one to each bannerroll

THE BODY

covered with a large sheet and a pall of velvet adorned with six escutcheons Clarenceux King of Arms, habited as the other officers and Arms and bearing at the head of the Body a Viscount's coronet, upon a black velvet cushion. At the head of the barge the Union flag of the United Kingdom

FOURTH BARGE- Chief Mourners.

HIS MAJESTY'S BARGE

followed by barges of the several company's of the City of London.

Procession flanked by gun boats and row boats of the River Fencibles three of which proceeded in order to keep the River clear for the line of the procession; and three to guard the rear.



LET'S GO TO THE SEASIDE

In 1939 war with Germany was looming on the horizon and many families must have been worried of what their lives would turn into once war came. But some were still living life to the full and taking holidays by the sea.

The Southend Guide for that year published a 14 day stay in the borough. It makes interesting reading.

Day one

Morning – a walk along the cliffs and seafront from Leigh in the west to Shoeburyness in the east to obtain a knowledge of the surroundings

Afternoon – a visit to the Pier (orchestra, 25 performers, plays each afternoon)

Evening – visit a cinema or theatre

Day two

Morning – Thorpe Bay and Shoeburyness might be visited

Afternoon – listen to band at Cliffs Bandstand (the leading Army and civilian bands play each afternoon at 3pm)

Evening – visit new entertainments pavilion (opens October 1939)

Day three

Morning – sport can be indulged in, according to taste of individual (golf, tennis, putting, bowls, swimming, angling, boating etc) Sunbathing at Corporation seawater bath

Afternoon – visit Old Priory Park and Museum

Evening – dancing at one of the halls (Pier Pavilion, Queen's or Palace Hotels) or visit Kursaal.

Day four

Day trip by steamer to one of the Kent, Essex or French resorts, or trip by aeroplane from Southend Municipal Aerodrome

Evening – 'greycing' at Southend Stadium 8.15pm (Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays; also Fridays from end of June onwards)

Day five

Morning – Priory Park with its well-kept gardens, Museum and collection of birds (Tennis and bowls are available in this park)

Afternoon – on sea front or beach

Evening – Concert party at Pier Head

Day six

Day motor coach tour to Colchester (Norman Castle and Museum) or one of the many places of interest to which services run by the local motor coach companies.

Evening – Band on Cliffs or New Entertainments Pavilion (opens October 1939)

Day seven

Morning – a pleasant walk across the fields from the Old Town at Leigh to Hadleigh Castle. The walk can be continued across the fields to Benfleet (4 miles) returning by train or motor bus or returning by motor bus from Hadleigh

Afternoon – Visit Southchurch Hall and grounds (13th century moated Manor House) Eastern end or York Road

Evening – Cliffs band or Pier Pavilion or a cinema.

Day eight

Morning – a visit to Belfairs Park (golf is available here)

Afternoon – on the beach

Evening - Theatre, cinema or Entertainment Pavilion (opens October 1939)

Day nine

Morning – on the cliffs

Afternoon – visit beach at Thorpe Bay or Shoebury

Evening – Concert party at Pier Head

Day ten

Morning – visit Hockley Woods (by train in 14 minutes from LNER station). The woods afford scope for very pleasant rambles

Afternoon – visit new entertainment pavilion

Evening – Pier Pavilion, cinema or theatre

Day eleven

A day in London for provincial visitors (cheap day return by rail 3/8) Chief places of interest: Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, National Gallery, British Museum, Tower of London, St Paul's Cathedral, Zoological Gardens.

Evening – Cliffs band or cinema, concert party or Kursaal.

Twelfth day

Morning – Belfairs Woods or golf, tennis, bowls at one of the public courses or parks

Afternoon – Band on cliffs or Pier Head

Evening – Theatre or cinema

Thirteenth day

Morning – motor boat trip or bathing, seawater bath

Afternoon – band on the cliffs or Pier Head

Evening – visit new entertainments pavilion for dancing or concert

Fourteenth day

To be spent according to taste

I should think they needed a holiday after all that!!!

Can anyone tell me what 'greycing' is?



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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