



LEIGHWAY

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

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear All

I love doing Leighway, finding unusual and interesting stories connected to this wonderful place we live in. It does get harder and harder though.

You will see that this edition is very heavily PEOPLE led. I would really like Leighway to cover all aspects of Leigh, not just its history.

So if any of you out there are ecologists, architects, environmentalists, please put pen to paper and tell us about your experiences of Leigh in these areas.

We know from feedback that you all like the Leighway, so be a part of it and write an article.

The holiday season is coming to an end so who amongst you has been somewhere or seen something they would like to tell others about? Now is your chance.

The next Leighway will be in January so if you feel the urge please submit your articles to me by 31 December at Carole.mulroney@btinternet.com or via the Heritage Centre, 13A High Street, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 2EN.

Carole

DEAR DIARY

All our talks are held at Wesley Hall, Elm Road Methodist Church at 8 p.m entry charge of £1 for members and £2 for visitors. Our events and others for your enjoyment are as follows -

11-12 September - Regatta

13 October – Society talk on Leigh buildings – David Greenwood

31 October – Sunday lunch on the Wilton

10 November – Society talk - Leigh in the 70s – has it changed?

4 December 7.30 – Quiz - Den

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Over the last few years Leighway has helped several researchers in their quests to find long lost families or information about buildings or other issues related to the town. It also adds to our wealth of knowledge about the town and its folk. So keep the requests coming. We may not always be successful but who knows, that long lost 6th cousin may be waiting for your question.

LEIGH'S OLYMPIAN

With the Olympics just around the corner in time and place, it is nice to record one Leigh man who did the Town proud.

Martyn Taylor Lucking was born in Leigh in 1938. He attended Felsted School and in 1958 represented the UK in the shot putt at the Commonwealth Games in Cardiff bringing back a silver medal for a throw of just over 53 feet.

In 1960 he took part in the Rome Olympics coming a respectable 8th with a throw of 57 feet.

Two years later at the Perth Commonwealth Games Martyn won gold with a throw of 59 feet 4 inches.

Martyn appeared for a second time as an Olympian at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics where he came 16th with a throw of just under 58 feet.

Although Lucking is a local Leigh name, Martyn's father came from Northamptonshire, but his mother was a Leigh girl, a member of the Osborne family and his grandmother was a Brewer.

Dr Martyn Taylor Lucking was also Chairman of the British Athletics Foundation and advisor in relation to drug abuse, being involved in some very high profile cases.

CONSERVATION

The Borough Council is currently going through a process of reappraising all of its conservation areas.

Leigh has 4 conservation areas and the Borough has already completed the ones for Leigh Old Town and Chapmanslord.

They have just finished a consultation on the appraisals for Leigh Cliff and Leigh Conservation Areas.

Our Secretary, Margaret Buckey sits on the Council's Conservation Working Party which is made up of councilors and representatives of various local conservation groups.

In carrying out the appraisals the Council:

- identifies the area's special interest
- reviews conservation area boundaries
- assesses the need for enhancement proposals
- reviews the need for Article 4 Direction controls
- assist s preparation of the Local Development Document which will replace the current Borough Local Plan
- provides a basis for implementing policies and making informed development control decisions
- guides any future highway proposals in the area.

FORGOTTEN HERO? NOT ANYMORE



This very smart, but very young, man is Philip Bolt. Philip was a friend of James Johnson (son of James Henry Johnson, grocer of 2 Leigh Hill). Philip was the son of Daniel and Lucy Bolt of Station Road.

Philip joined the Mercantile Marine in World War 1 and served as a wireless operator on SS Pomeranian. He was killed on 15 April 1918 when the ship was torpedoed and sunk off the coast of Portland Bill, Dorset, by the German u-boat UC-77, forty five lives were lost, including Philip.

UC-77 was a German Type UC II mine laying submarine or U-boat in the German Imperial Navy. In 13 patrols UC-77 was credited with sinking 4 ships, either by torpedo or by mines laid. UC-77 was mined and sunk off Flanders on 14 July 1918.

Linda Marshall, the granddaughter of J H Johnson, has had this photo in her family's archives many years and it serves to show the friendship between the two men.

Whilst Philip's name appears on the Mercantile Marine memorial on Tower Hill, Linda was keen to see Philip remembered in Leigh. This can now be done through investigations which have proved Philip's connection to Leigh.

At the time she was sunk the Pomeranian was carrying a cargo of Fuller's earth for Messrs Daulton & Co for manufacturing plumbs and crucibles at the Royal Daulton Factory, along with other general cargo. The wreck of the Pomeranian is an official war grave.

LADY OF LEIGH?



Does anyone recognise this lady. The Photo was taken by James & Co studio in Southend and bears no identification. Almost certainly she is from Leigh and possibly related to or employed by Mr and Mrs J H Johnson.

Is she in your family album too? If so Linda Marshall would love to know who she is. Please contact the Heritage Centre or carole@leighsociety.co.uk if you have any information about her.

THE LAST TOPPER



This is William Davidson, one time constable of Leigh. Although not a Leighman, William, who had joined the police in 1872, had been stationed at Southend then Rochford. His service to Leigh was to last for 25 years and on his retirement he was presented with a purse of gold and an illuminated address by the inhabitants of Leigh.

William has the distinction of being the last Essex policeman to wear a top hat which was the form of headgear used before helmets came in.

The top hat was designed and first worn by John Hetherington, a London men's clothing maker, in the 1840's. The first time he wore it in public, women screamed and fainted, and crowds gathered. It caused an uproar which led to his arrest and subsequent fine of £50, an absolute fortune in those days. A law was also passed forbidding anybody to wear the top hat in public on the grounds it scared timid people.

The officer, who dealt with the scandal, described the offence as follows: "Hetherington had such a tall and shiny construction on his head that it must have terrified nervous people. The sight of this construction was so overstated that various women fainted, children began to cry and dogs started to bark. One child broke his arm among all the jostling."

Hetherington relied in his defence on the right of every Englishman to place what he wanted on his head.

SHINE A LITTLE LIGHT

Did you know that the world's first screw-pile lighthouse was built by a blind Irish engineer, Alexander Mitchell. It was constructed in 1838 at the mouth of the Thames and was known as the Maplin Sands lighthouse.

A **screw-pile lighthouse** is a lighthouse which stands on piles that are screwed into sandy or muddy sea or river bottoms.



The Maplin Sands Lighthouse

FOR ONE WEEK, AND ONE WEEK ONLY

An article in Leighway about Fred Karno led to another serendipitous meeting in the Heritage Centre with Roger Robinson, a leading light in SAPS AT SEA, the Southend 'TENT' of the Laurel and Hardy Appreciation Society, known as Sons of the Desert, whose branches 'tents' exist in many countries each group taking a name of one of their films.

The Tent in Southend was formed in 1998, and meets every month, to enjoy the laughter, fun and special magic of Laurel and Hardy.

For one week in August 1952, the comedy partners, stayed and performed in Southend. Roger has very kindly allowed us to use information from his article about the duo's visit .



Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy remain unquestionably cinema's greatest comedy partnership. They made their first appearance together in a 1920 silent film called Lucky Dog. Their comedy team was formed during the silent movie era and when the talkies arrived in the late 1920's, they made a successful transition to sound comedy. Their initial success was in the 'short' films that lasted 20 minutes but they progressed into feature length films, making 106 films together. Their last Hollywood film in 1945 but by then their popularity in America had waned. They believed their careers to be over. However their popularity had become international as they had made versions of their films speaking Spanish, French and German and also their films had been dubbed in other languages.

In 1947, Bernard Delfont wanted to book an American act to tour the UK, initially for 12 weeks. He invited Laurel and Hardy to perform as part of a variety tour. They received a tremendous reception wherever they went and the tour lasted 15 months during which time they appeared in the Royal Variety Show as well as performed several European venues. Stan Laurel, who had started his career on the stage, and Oliver Hardy, were both delighted to return to the UK for extensive tours in 1952 and 1953-4. It was to be the Indian summer of their careers.

Advance publicity in the local papers, announced the forthcoming appearance of Laurel and Hardy at the Odeon Southend for their week's performance. Stan, Ollie and their respective wives travelled by train from London to Southend Central Station on Sunday 3rd August 1952. During their stay at the Palace Hotel, they were photographed on the balcony outside their rooms with the famous Southend Pier in the background. Although there is no record of their going onto the Pier, although it seems likely that they would have done during their stay. It appears that the Laurels and Hardys did see a little bit of the town as their wives went to Patience Cameras in Queens Road where owner Joe Patience remembered that one of them bought an Ensign Selfix 12.20 camera. Stan also met a former friend Ted Desmond alias Ted Leo, who he had worked with on stage in England before going to America. Teddy was then the manager of one of the arcades in Southend.

There is also a lovely account of Stan, talking to Harry Day, the drummer in the Palace resident band. Stan was unwinding after the evening's performance at the Odeon and in conversation with Harry learned that he had just become a father. Harry and Stan celebrated by visiting Harry's address in Fairfax Drive and 'wetting the baby's head'. Another person recalled that Laurel and Hardy visited fortune teller Madame Renee in her booth on Palace Hill. Apparently for a few years after she proudly displayed a poster of Laurel and Hardy with a signed inscription that read "To Madame Renee, Many thanks for the excellent reading. Next time we will wash our hand"

They topped the bill of the variety show at the Odeon, which included ten other acts amongst which were Archie Elray a ventriloquist, the Great Cingalee magician, Lorraine the singing cartoonist and ace accordionists, Mackenzie Reid and Dorothy. But the audience had come to see Stan and Ollie and their 30 minute act called 'A Spot of Trouble' in which they find themselves stranded on a railway station having missed the last train, was well received to packed houses.

Laurel and Hardy thoroughly enjoyed their warm welcome in Southend and were happy to sign autographs and have their picture

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of their appearance in Southend, the Saps At Sea Tent organised a Laurel and Hardy Convention in 2002 which was attended by 100 devotees from the UK, Europe and America. As part of the celebrations, a blue plaque was unveiled on Southend Pier by Sir John Mills. The plaque was then on display at the Pier Museum until it could be found a permanent and suitable site.

In January 2010 the plaque was finally placed in the most fitting of locations. The Palace Hotel had undergone extensive renovation in recent years. The Park Inn Palace, as it is now known, has been transformed into a plush modern hotel with wonderful refurbishment to the interior and retaining the distinct character externally. As part of the hotel's commitment to remember the heritage of the town, the Saps at Sea were contacted to see if we had any suggestions. We certainly did! The result of which is that the blue plaque is now located in the reception area of the hotel, together with a plaque that the Saps At Sea have donated explaining that Laurel and Hardy stayed in the hotel. In addition, the hotel have named 2 adjoining function rooms, the Stan Laurel and the Oliver Hardy Rooms. How very appropriate that these are located in the area where Laurel and Hardy and their wives had adjoining suites. The blue plaque will be a permanent reminder of the visit of the screen's most famous comedy team to Southend.

Our thanks to Roger and SAPS

If you are interested, SAPS meets on the 2nd Sunday of each month at the Naval & Military Club, Royal Mews, Southend between 5.15pm-8.45pm. It is a fun evening and an opportunity to see classic and rare Laurel and Hardy clips and films. Contact Roger at roger.robinson5@btinternet.com or visit their website at www.saps-at-sea.co.uk

HERITAGE HELPER

The Leigh Society was very happy to respond recently to a request from the Prince's Trust to have a young A level student to help in the museum for a few days in July as part of a confidence building course. The young lady was very willing and interested in the museum's activities including school visits and we wish her well in her time at the Sixth Form College next year.

Margaret Buckey

VISCOUNT STEPHEN PIERCEY



A day out at Brooklands Racing Museum with a group of friends proved to be very interesting. I did not know that Brooklands was also an aviation museum and that there was a connection to Southend Airport.

This is what we found.

G-APIM (India Mike (IM)) is a V806 Viscount the partly completed fuselage of which had arrived at Brooklands in December 1957 when the main assembly commenced. It took to the air from Brooklands on 4 June 1958 and was subsequently delivered to British European Airways Corporation at Heathrow. The Captain on that inaugural flight to Barcelona was a Ray Piercey.

IM carried 42 tourist and 16 first class passengers. In service it was used on B.E.A.s European routes extending as far afield as Tel-Aviv Moscow and Tripoli. After more than ten years with B.E.A. she was put into open storage for a while and the transferred to Cambrian Airways in 1971 flying from Cardiff-Rhoose Airport.

By 1982 she was the last of her type to be retired by BA. and flown to Cardiff for storage pending sale and in 1984 the Southend based airline British Air Ferries (B.A.F.) purchased her and she was ferried with her undercarriage to Southend in 1984 where she underwent a major overhaul and was ready for service with B.A.F. by July. On 25 August 1984 she was christened 'Viscount Stephen Piercey' after the chief photographer of 'Flight International' who had been tragically killed in a mid air collision. It had been Stephen's father, Ray, who had flown IM on its inaugural flight in 1958.

IM's flying career ended abruptly on 11 January 1988 when at Southend Airport a Guernsey Airlines plane lost hydraulic power, leading to a brake and steering failure and a collision with the empty parked Viscount, destroying the left hand side of the nose and coming to rest with the Viscount lodged under the wing. The Viscount was assessed 'beyond economical repair' and put into store and later donated many serviceable parts to other Viscounts in the B.A.F. fleet. The Guernsey plane was transported to Biggin Hill, and scrapped.

On 29 June 1989 IM was offered to Brooklands Museum. IM was dismantled and 'on site' repairs were started. A Crane was driven to Southend to help and on 11 February 1990 the main fuselage was loaded and transported by lorry to Brooklands. And so it was that on 11 February 1990 IM became the only Viscount to travel under the River Thames (via the Dartford Tunnel) on its way back to its birthplace at Brooklands. On the M25 she was stopped by Surrey Police because they thought it was getting too dark to travel! She therefore spent the night in a lay-by at Leatherhead and continued to Brooklands next morning. Since then she has been restored and is spectacular exhibit for Brooklands Museum.



(with thanks to Andy Lambert of Brooklands Museum – if you would like to see a video of the rescue operation go to www.vsp.org.uk)

HELLO, HELLO, HELLO LEIGH AT THE MOVIES

Basil Clive Dear may not be a name that immediately springs to mind, nor indeed may his show business name, Basil Dearden but we can guarantee that you will have seen one, if not all, his films.



Basil was born on 1 January 1911 in Leigh (the family lived in Woodfield Road). Basil first began working as a director at Ealing Studios, co-directing comedy films and where he also directed *The Captive Heart* starring Michael Redgrave. The film was entered into the 1946 Cannes Film Festival.

The Blue Lamp (1950), probably the most frequently shown of Dearden's Ealing films, is a police drama which first introduced audiences to PC George Dixon, later resurrected for the long-running *Dixon of Dock Green* television series. His last Ealing film, *Out of the Clouds*, was released in 1955.

In later years he became associated with the writer and producer Michael Relph, and together they made films on subjects generally not tackled by British cinema in this era. These included homosexuality (*Victim*, 1961) and race relations (*Pool of London*, 1951; *Sapphire*, 1959). In the late 1960s Dearden also made some big-scale epics including *Khartoum* (1966), with Charlton Heston, and the Victorian era black comedy *The Assassination Bureau* (1969). His last film was *The Man Who Haunted Himself* (1970) with Roger Moore, with whom he later made three episodes of the television series the Persuaders. He was killed in a car accident in 1971.

NOT SO 'SWEET' FANNY ADAMS

In about January 1861 a child, Eliza, was born in Leigh to Elizabeth and Frances Barham. The child was not baptised in Leigh and the family had no further children in the town, in fact they appear to have had no connection to the town at all.

In the census of that year which was taken on the night of 7/8 April they were in Creeksea on the Dengie Hundred, where Eliza's mother, Elizabeth, and her forebears had been born.

By 1871 the family had moved to Leyton and never returned to Creeksea.

Nothing really remarkable in that you might say but the child Eliza was the granddaughter of Fanny Adams, who married and became Fanny Bird, the Creeksea Witch.

Fanny Adams was born in Burnham or Southminster, where she was baptized, and married first a Thomas Westwood and then Thomas Bird. **She** lived at Tinkers Hole, 'a devil-haunted wood' near Ostend (near Creeksea) and was said to have bewitched a farmer's steam threshing machine causing it to break down. The labourers in revenge smashed all the windows of her cottage and she narrowly escaped personal violence. It is also said that she had trafficked with the Devil and during one of these rituals a sheet of lightning had come down setting her arm on fire. This was the local explanation for her withered arm and incidentally for her husband's club foot.

It is said that on her deathbed Fanny tried to pass on her powers by handing over her imps to her daughter, but she, 'though the living image of her mother, was a good woman and refused to take them.'

It would be nice to think a local girl had coined the phrase 'sweet Fanny Adams', but sadly that is not the case. The phrase we use nowadays has no connection to the local witch or to it's origins.

The Real Fanny Adams

Eight-year-old Fanny Adams was murdered in Alton, Hampshire in August 1867 by Frederick Baker, a 24-year-old solicitor's clerk who dismembered her body which was found in a field near the town.



Fanny Adams

Whilst searching Baker's office desk, the police found his diary. It contained a damning entry which the suspect admitted writing shortly before his arrest. "24th August, Saturday - killed a young girl. It was fine and hot". At his trial Baker maintained that this entry, written when he was drunk, simply meant that he

was aware a girl had been murdered. Found guilty, Baker was hanged on Christmas Eve 1867.

The case was the source of enormous public concern and newspaper reports of the time concentrated on the youth and innocence of the victim.

Everyone living in England at the time would have known the name of 'sweet' Fanny Adams. With typical grisly humour, sailors in the Royal Navy came to use the expression to refer to unpleasant meat rations they were often served - likening them to the dead girl's remains. Served with tins of mutton as the latest shipboard convenience food in 1869, they gloomily declared that their butchered contents must surely be 'Sweet Fanny Adams'. Gradually accepted throughout the armed services as a euphemism for 'sweet nothing' it passed into common usage. As an aside, the large tins in which the meat was packed for the royal navy, were often used as mess tins and even today mess tins are colloquially known as 'fannys'.

It wasn't until later that 'sweet Fanny Adams' came to mean a certain swearing phrase. The coincidence of Fanny Adams' initials F.A. would appear to be the cause of its use. Walter Downing, an Australian soldier who fought in Europe in the First World War, wrote a glossary of WWI soldier's slang called *Digger Dialects* and is the first to record the link.

'Sweet Fanny Adams' - nothing; vacuity."

DID YOU KNOW?

That the Yacht Club's vessel, the Wilton was the first warship in the world to be constructed from glass-reinforced plastic (GRP). Her design was based upon the existing Ton class minesweepers, and she was fitted with equipment recovered from the scrapped HMS Derritton. The use of GRP gave the vessel a low magnetic signature against the threat of magnetic mines.

Wilton was unofficially known as HMS Tupperware, HMS Indestructible, and "The Plastic Duck".



IMAGES OF ENGLAND

Images of England is a 'point in time' photographic library of England's listed buildings, recorded at the turn of the 21st century. The website is operated by English Heritage. You can view over 300,000 images of England's built heritage from lamp posts to lavatories, phone boxes to toll booths, mile stones to gravestones, as well as thousands of bridges, historic houses and churches. You can find them at <http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk/>

THE PEOPLES' WAR ARCHIVE

The Peoples' War archive contains stories of ordinary people compiled through the BBC over several years. Here is an entry relating to Leigh by W W Smart which is reprinted here in its original form and is reproduced in accordance with the permission granted by the BBC on their web site.

I was born in Pall Mall, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, just after midnight in 1932; a good year, an Olympic Year and the same year as Elizabeth Taylor and Diana Dore. Leigh has a shrimp & shellfish fishing fleet in the old town, situated up a creak on the north side of the River Thames in Essex. My Father was a Police Officer, born during 1900. He had been a Shipwright in the First World War, at Chatham Dockyard, Kent. He crossed over the River Thames to Essex in the depression of 1926 and joined the Southend on Sea Police Force. Neither of my Grandfathers served in the forces in the first World War, and my Father did not get called up in Second World War; being 45 years old at the wars end and a member of the Police force. Being a bit artistic he volunteered to do a large local street map of Leigh, sized about 4' (1.2m) x 2' (61mm) showing all the fire points, water hydrants and water storage points, which were often metal tanks above ground holding 1,000s of gallons of water, dotted around town.

I started school in 1937 at the age of 5 at North Street Infants School. The Junior School backed onto the Infants and also backed on to Pall Mall and the Police Station at end of Pall Mall; both were handy. Our house was No. 142 and one of four Victorian terrace type houses built for shops, but only one was a shop a grocers. These were sandwiched between on the right a pair of modern two tier flats and a private school with a sports hall on the left making up the block.

The War started when I was 7 years old, I remember dancing around the Maypole on Empire Day in the playground with my sister June, but sometime afterwards we were all lined up in the playground with our small cases and gas masks, (which I still have) ready to board a bus to take us to Southend-on-Sea railway station. This was in June 1940 where we boarded a train for London. My best friend's mother (John Shorey) was one of the helpers travelling with us. John's father was a sergeant in the Home Guard. We changed to the Northern Line train in London, and this was all an adventure for us kids. I do not remember how we were fed but my sister and I eventually arrived at New Mills in Derbyshire.

We left the train and lost sight of John and his mother, who I believe went on to another town. June and I ended up at a large house in its own grounds with a lake called 'Watford Mount'. I remember we were in an upstairs room on camp beds. The local people came around and picked out which children they wanted to foster. I was taken by a childless couple who lived nearly next door, I played up so much that they had to go back for my sister June, we then left through a hole in the hedge to a block of three farm cottages next door, ours

was number 3, on the right. Mr and Mrs Garside and her brother had a nice two story cottage with fields on two sides where cows were grazing, and a nice long front garden sloping down to the road which was like an allotment with rows of vegetables. I had my 8th. Birthday with them, I remember having a football, which Mr Garside took away because I was kicking it too near the windows. We went to a school about quarter of a mile away on a hill. There was a mill near by and a pond across the road. One event which will always live in my mind was a swarm of frogs which came out of the pond in their tens of thousands. They were around an inch in size and came

right up to our back door, you could not step out without sweeping them away.

Our next move was when my Mother came to join us with my aunty Anne (my dad's sister), from Kent, and her two young daughters aged about 3 and 4 years. We all moved into rented accommodation, in a Farm House on the top of a hill, with a Mrs Winterbottom. The farmer, a Mr Thorpe, ran a Butcher's Shop down the hill, where he lived. Although the farm had a herd of cows, some pigs and many chickens; it also grew many crops.

Our time there, although not very long was very pleasant and educating. We went to Springbank school at the bottom of hill across the fields. We had to go through a herd of cows if they were in that area.

The school was opposite a Slaughter House and the animals were penned in at the back. One event I remember; we pinched some bits of card-ice from the slaughter house and put them in our ink-wells at school which made them smoke with a white haze. We soon got used to the animals, I used to help with the milking, getting the milking machines ready and I also remember chasing the pigs around the farm and collecting the chicken eggs which they laid all over the place. I had a local school friend Jack at this time about my age. He was the son of one of the farm workers, who lived in a cottage across the road from the farmhouse. One cold day we went out with the farm wagon to cut kale, a form of greens. I got heat-burn and when I got home I put my hands in front of the fire witch made it worse. Another day Jack and I had to take two large horses to a nearby farm, the two cart-horses feet were rather large for an eight year old and I let the rope go, it was all right because one horse followed the other down the lane. Mrs Winterbottom conned us children to weed the flower beds, she said she had buried some 2/- (10p) coins in the earth in the flowerbeds, but we found nothing. I also remember there were Jigsaw Puzzles as pictures on her walls. My father came to visit us and did some sketches through the upstairs window (we still have one somewhere).

The farmhouse is still there and is now a riding stables run by Mr Thorpe's granddaughter. His daughter lives in a bungalow at the entrance to the farm complex. I have visited the area a few times over the years; the first time was when I was 21 and doing my stint, in the National Service in the Royal Air Force at Padgate, not too far away. I went to New Mills on a weekend pass, while my fellow mates went to Blackpool to rough-it for the night. I stayed the night with Mr and Mrs Garside who were surprised to see me after a twelve year gap. I remembered the layout of the town but not the ups and downs of the hills.

For the last 50 odd years I have lived at Grimsby, Lincolnshire (where I met and married Brenda and settled down.) It is a lot nearer to New Mills than Southend-on-Sea! I worked 27 years for Unilever Corn Ltd., at Birds Eye foods and MacFisheries. My last visit to New Mills was in 2004 while returning from taking my youngest, 22 year old Granddaughter Gillion, to University near Crew, Manchester. The actual farmhouse had just changed hands, the owner a retired school teacher (who had taught at the school on a hill, the same school we had gone to, all those years ago when first at New Mills). She kindly showed me around the old farm house and it was the first time I had been upstairs in the room we had rented since I was 8 years old. The War hardly touched New Mills, one night a German plan was heard over-head and every one ran for the shelters, we did not feel much danger.

'WW2 People's War is an online archive of wartime memories contributed by members of the public and gathered by the BBC. The archive can be found at bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar

THE TOTTENHAM OUTRAGE

Some of you may have seen a letter in a recent Evening Echo appealing for any information regarding the relationship of an Edwardian murder in Tottenham to the Joscelyne family believed to be from the Southend area. Following up the letter proved to be an interesting pastime.

The Tottenham Outrage of 1909 was a bungled wages snatch at Schnurmann's Rubber Factory in Chestnut Road, Tottenham. The target payroll was £80 and the robbers were two Russian anarchists, Paul Hefeld and Jacob Lapidus.

As the payroll was being taken through the factory gates Jacob grabbed the boy carrying it from behind and attempted to snatch the money. There was a struggle between the two robbers, the boy and the Company chauffeur during which Hefeld produced a gun and fired several shots at the chauffeur whose life was saved by his motoring coat and several layers of clothing.

Although attempts were made to stop the getaway the men fled firing shots as they went.

Hearing the shots some off duty policemen came from the Police Station, including a PC Tyler, who in his haste forgot his helmet.

The chase continued in earnest. The men being pursued on horseback and by car (PC Tyler running alongside holding the car's left hand door).

When the car entered Mitchley Road, it was stopped by shots which hit one man and the radiator, causing a leak of water.

Ralph Joscelyne, aged 10 years, was helping the baker on his rounds in Mitchley Road and like all young boys he could not resist an adventure and he ran alongside the car. He was hit by a bullet and fell to the ground.



A witness to the shooting ran to his aid though she feared he was already dead. She handed the boy to a commercial traveller who was following the chase on his bicycle and he carried Ralph to Tottenham High Road and stopped a passing van which took him to hospital where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

In the meantime the chase was continuing, the men still shooting at their pursuers and PC Tyler who was nearest to the gunmen called out "Come on, give in, the game's over" then reeled and fell to the ground on to his face.

Vain efforts were made at first aid and eventually an ambulance arrived and PC Tyler too was taken to hospital where he died five minutes after admission.

The chase went on and on for miles and several people were wounded as the robbers fled. Eventually they hijacked a tram threatening the travellers.

Policemen stopped another tram and told its driver to follow the tram carrying the robbers, blowing their whistles. All sorts of vehicles joined the pursuit including a car and an advertising man's cart which gained on the tram. When it drew close, Hefeld fired and hit the cart's pony causing the cart to overturn.

Other people were shot before Jacob and Hefeld jumped from the tram, looking for another way of escape.

They jumped on a milk cart and set off in the direction of Epping Forest, still firing and injuring. Having overturned the milk cart on a corner they abandoned it, and stole a greengrocer's vehicle at gunpoint. One drove while the other sat on the tailboard, firing at anyone who came close. The chase continued until one of the robbers was wounded and they abandoned the cart and made for the railway arch across Ching Brook where they were cornered. Hefeld had only two bullets left, and urging Jacob to save himself, he shot himself in the head, but not fatally. He was overpowered and driven by the police to hospital where he died 3 weeks later.

Jacob Lapidus got on to the railway and a building site, with civilians and police still in pursuit but still shooting all the way. Eventually he was cornered in a cottage and was seen at the window peering round a curtain. He was asked to surrender three times but responded each time with more gunfire.

Armed police attempted to flush him out and called once more for him to surrender. Hearing no reply they climbed the stairs to break in but he used his last bullet to kill himself as officers broke in and fired shots through the door at him.

The funerals of PC Tyler and Ralph Joscelyne were massive affairs. The funeral cortege was one and a half miles long and took 25 minutes to pass any given spot. It arrived at Abney Park in Stoke Newington an hour late. The procession was not allowed in the cemetery, nor were members of the public. Such was the crowd at the cemetery gates that several women fainted in the ensuing scuffles.

PC Tyler's coffin was carried by six of his colleagues; Ralph Joscelyne's coffin was carried by four policemen.

On the same day Jacob Lapidus was interred at Queens Road Cemetery, Walthamstow, in unconsecrated ground.

A collection of £1,055 was raised for PC Tyler's widow and as a result of this event the King's Police Medal was instituted for gallantry. PC Tyler did not receive it though for it was not then given posthumously.

The Joscelyne family received £10 from a relief fund.

The 1911 census which gives more information on families than earlier censuses records that John Joscelyne (born in Leigh) and his wife, Louisa, had been married for 27 years and had had 8 children, only 7 of which were surviving.

John Joscelyne died in 1916, it was said of a broken heart. But Louisa lived on, a widow for 36 years, to the age of 88, dying in 1952. For all of those long years she grieved for her son and polished his boots daily. She was buried with the boots.

The Tottenham Outrage became nationwide news causing a public outcry.

A Centenary Memorial Ceremony took place on Friday, 23rd January 2009, exactly one hundred years to the day since the Tottenham Outrage occurred.

The information in this article has been taken from <http://www.outrage1909.org.uk/index.html> where a much fuller account, giving a map of the chase and many more pictures and information, is available. Attempts have been made to contact the owner of the website to no avail so we hope they will forgive Leighway for using their information to bring to its readers the story of a son of a son of Leigh.

PLANNING

Over the last few months the Society has responded to a number of planning applications affecting the conservation areas.

Picking out the more prominent proposals - we welcomed the news that the Grand was to be refurbished but had reservations about changes to the elevational treatments which we expressed to the Borough.

In the Old Town we objected to the Peterboat's proposals for a new café on the car park. This means the loss of Ivy Osborne's stall in its present form. We were concerned about the conflict between public and cars and the loss of open views and also the rather utilitarian design of the building. The Borough Council have, however, granted permission.

Many of you will have read in the local press about the proposals for a Hospice development on the green belt land south of Belton Way West. No application has been submitted as yet but even without the design the principle of not developing on this land is of major importance. We have therefore advised the Borough Council we will object in principle to the development on the grounds of loss of green belt and the nature resource of this land.

Members may be interested to know that Marden Homes has submitted a new application for 33 Hadleigh Road (St George's). Previous proposals for the erection of one part 3/part 6 storey block of 9 flats, one part 2/part 4 storey block of 6 flats, one 3 storey block of 5 flats and one 3 storey detached dwelling house, underground storage and parking for 30 cars, were refused on appeal. The new proposals will comprise 1 block of 4 storeys, 15 two / three / four bedroom luxury apartments with estuary views. For those interested plans and photos are available upon request to 01702 437100 info@mardenhomes.co.uk.

At the appeal into the previous application the Inspector considered that the main issues were whether the development would be harmful to the character or appearance of the Leigh Conservation Area and the effect on the living conditions of the residents of the neighbouring properties with respect to privacy and outlook.

To view the appeal decision hold down the control key and click on

<http://www.pcs.planningportal.gov.uk/pcsportal/fscdav/READONLY?OBJ=COO.2036.300.2.7517807&NAME=/Decision%20Letter.pdf>

THE NEW GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL PLANNING

In the next issue, when things have settled down a bit, we will review the new Government's localism agenda and what it will mean for local planning. In the meantime the Government has made a start on garden grabbing.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of 'gardens grabbed' for development in the last 12 years.

The percentage of new homes built on previously residential land - which includes back gardens - has increased to 25 per cent, up 14 percentage points since 1997, when only one in ten homes was built on similar land.

The Government has changed the planning rules to give councils new powers to prevent unwanted garden grabbing by

taking gardens out of the brownfield category that includes derelict factories and disused railway sidings.

This will dramatically transform councils' ability to prevent unwanted development on gardens where local people object and protect the character of their neighbourhoods.

The Decentralisation Minister, Greg Clark said:

"For years local people were powerless to do anything about the blight of garden grabbing as the character of their neighbourhoods was destroyed and their wishes ignored.

"We can see from these statistics that last year an even higher proportion of homes were built on previously residential land, which includes back gardens. Building on gardens robs communities of green breathing space, safe places for children to play and havens for urban wildlife.

"It was ridiculous that gardens were classified in the same group as derelict factories and disused railway sidings. Now we've changed the classification of garden land, councils and communities will no longer have their decisions constantly overruled, and will have the power to work with industry to shape future development that is appropriate for their area."

The Government is also consulting on proposals to streamline the environmental assessment regulations.

LEIGH OLD TOWN

How much do you know?

Next time you visit the Old Town, test your observational skills with these questions –

1. Name 3 birds which can be seen on the nature reserve.
2. What is the colour of the Leigh Buoy?
3. What are the stones around the anchor?
4. What number is the Endeavour?
5. What year was the spring reinstated, who was the Chairman of the Management Committee and what is the motto over the gate to the Cundit?
6. What is the name of the original brewery of the Peterboat?
7. From which Wharf can you sail, jetski, power boat, kayak and windsurf?
8. What is the building which houses Lynn Tait's shop?
9. Where is the high water mark of the 1953 floods?
10. Who is the mast on Strand Wharf dedicated to?
11. What was the name of Leigh in the Domesday Book?
12. What is the name of the Wharf by the beach?
13. Guess what the original use of the Leigh Sailing Club building was.

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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