



LEIGHWAY

The newsletter of the Leigh Society



AND COUNTING

This year celebrates the Society's 40th anniversary and to celebrate we are holding an open house at the Heritage Centre on 22 September. Please see the flyer in your Leighway.

A DIAMOND DAY



The Queen's Diamond Jubilee was celebrated all over Leigh with street parties etc but after the deluge the weekend culminated with the Leigh Town Council's Jubilee Fair in the Library Gardens and the lighting of the beacon on top of St Clement's Church tower at 10.15pm on the Monday.

The sky had cleared and as the flame flared a full moon appeared over the end of the Pier and a golden pathway shone across the Estuary. What a memorable and historic sight! Leigh's special tribute to the Queen at the mouth of the River Thames. Margaret Buckey

DEAR DIARY

All Society meetings are held at Wesley Hall, Elm Road Methodist Church (unless otherwise stated) at 8 p.m - Members £1, visitors £2

22 September – Members' Day at the Heritage Centre– 40th Anniversary

17 October - Thames Estuary Shipwrecks – Claire Hunt

28 October – Lunch on Wilton

7 November – The Southend I knew as a child - John Smart

CANVEY COTTAGES

As a child in the late fifties/early sixties, Joanne Freeman spent many holidays staying with her grandmother's cousin and his wife, Bert and Nellie Baker, at No 1 Canvey Cottages - the family at No 2 was a Bruce and Carla Emery. The cottages were situated on the hill between the end of (what is now) Laurel Close and Hadleigh Road. They were further back than the car park that now stands at the bottom of Hadleigh Road and there was a flight of stone steps up a hill to them. The yard behind them backed directly onto the garden of a house in Hadleigh Road - the house was occupied by a family called Emerson.

Joanne has many happy memories of her time spent in Leigh but sadly has no photographs of the Cottages and so has written to the Society in the hope that one of us may be able to help. If you are able to help Joanne please get in touch with Carole via the Heritage Centre or at carole.mulroney@btinternet.com

GUIDING FOR GIRLS

Mavis Sipple shares fond memories of her days in the Guides in Leigh.

I was eleven when I joined the 5th Leigh-on-Sea Girl Guides, The guide Captain was Mabel Boyton. We met at St Clement's Church Hall (In the Small Hall) on Friday nights. I was in the Daffodil Patrol. Mrs Boyton was quite strict, she checked our uniform at the beginning of each meeting making sure we were 'prepared' with a penknife, safety pin, string, clean hankie and other things I'm sure I've forgotten.

Once a month was Church Parade, we formed up outside the hall and led by the banner bearer, marched along Rectory Grove to the church. I remember once after the service, we were allowed to climb up the winding stairs to the top of the tower, as I leaned over my beret fell off and landed on the hand of the clock. Captain was not pleased and the church warden grumbled a bit as he went into the tower and turned the clock hands round until my hat fell off.

One Sunday in 1950, was a very sad day for Leigh, as news went round that Canon King had died. Our church parade that day was very subdued we didn't march, but filed quietly through the library gardens past the rear of the Rectory. The flag on the church hung at half mast, the church was hushed, everyone was silent and shocked.

The Rev. Head took over at St. Clement's, his daughter came to guides. We went to the Rectory for First Aid classes run by a lady who lived there, I loved going there it was cosy and had huge thick walls and always a real coal fire. Occasionally the Rev Head would call in at a meeting to see what we were up to, we had to be on our best behaviour for that.

We took guiding seriously and worked hard to gain as many badges as possible. We learnt first aid, cooking, childcare, we went on nature walks and treasure hunts, played games and usually ended our meeting with a singsong

We also went camping, first in Cornwall, to a tiny place, Parr Sands, right on the cliff top. The beach was wonderful, with its cliffs, caves and rock pools full of sea anemones and strange creatures not found on Leigh Beach. She took us camping to Guide Acres in Thundersley, organised a cycling trip to Danbury where we camped.

Being a guide opened up a new world to me and I have nothing but praise for Mabel Boyton. She took us to London, to see the sights, Buckingham Palace, which

seemed rather dull, the Tower, and best of all the Crown Jewels, beautiful and sparkling in a huge glass case. I was sorry when the time came to leave 5th Leigh, so I became a Ranger.



Mavis' cap of many badges

LO LO LO

Recently the Heritage Centre received a donation of many small items of ephemera from the Jago family (thanks to Mr Choppin for passing these on to us).

G F Jago was part of the Leigh boat builders, Johnson and Jago. The papers are mainly Boatman's and moorings licences and small bills from local traders – very interesting in pinpointing where these businesses were in the 1920s-50s.

However, in amongst the bundle was an interesting document stamped CUSTOM HOUSE, SOUTHEND which set out the requirements for marking of boats as follows-

Marking

- a) The letters shall precede the number
- b) The letters and number shall be placed on each bow of the boat, three or four inches below the gunwale and so as to be clearly visible
- c) The letters and number shall be painted in white oil colour on a black format

Letters, name of boat and port -

The name of each boat and that of the port or place of registry shall be painted in white oil colour on a black ground outside the stern of the boat in letters which shall be not less than three inches in height and half an inch in breadth

WITH APOLOGIES

To Sheila Osborne. Some typographical errors crept into her article in last Leighway about her family history. To put the record straight – John Church married Martha Burrill in 1870 not 1810 and James Dowsett died in 1875 not 1815 and Martha died in 1879 not 1819.

A CANDLE TO LIGHT YOU TO BED

Looking around Plumbs cottage you may wonder how they managed for light when it got dark.

For many centuries people relied on the rush light as it was cheap and easily made. Stems of the common soft rush (*Juncus effuses*) were gathered and kept in water, then peeled from top to bottom leaving one narrow outer rib to support the inner pith. These peeled rushes were laid out on the grass to dry and bleach before they were dipped into hot fat or grease. Gilbert White in his "Natural History" of 1775 says that a 2ft 4in rush "burnt only 3 minutes short of an hour" and notes that 1 lb of prepared rushes cost 3/-; there were 1600 individual "lights" in a pound. Poor people often made lights and used them as currency to buy drinks. White goes on to say "the very poor buy a halfpenny candle every evening, which in their draughty rooms does not burn much more than two hours."

Candles were more expensive than rush lights and wax candles particularly so. Cheapest were tallow "dips", made by dipping a wick repeatedly into molten fat - usually mutton - until a good thickness was achieved. In use dips were inclined to be smoky and smelly. Candles were taxed from 1709 until 1831, wax ones bore most tax.

Even in middle class households it was common for rush lights to be used in rooms such as bed chambers rather than candles. The early candles required regular trimming of the wick and special scissor type instruments were devised known as snuffers. In 1825 the Frenchman Cambacères invented the plaited cotton wick which automatically curls over and burns away when lit, making snuffing unnecessary.

Candle making was mechanized in 1834; the machines could produce 500 an hour. Paraffin wax candles came in to use in the 1850s. Paraffin first came in to use in the 1840s and began selling on a large scale from 1856, with the working classes adopting it for lamps from about 1862.

Though gas lighting had been demonstrated in 1804 for many years it was confined to streets, factories, business premises and public buildings. Part of the problem which prevented its use in the home was that the gas was often not purified properly so that small rooms would smell of rotten eggs.

It was only when purification had been perfected, the gas mantle had been invented in the 1880s (giving a good bright light) and the slot meter became widely available that gas lighting became attractive to householders. However, it is likely that the inhabitants of Plumbs Cottage could never have afforded it.

John Smart

VICTORIA DATE VINEGAR



I may have missed something but in the vast array of condiments we can choose from today I had not come across Date Vinegar. But in 1896 an advert appeared in the Essex Newsmen for the Victoria Date Company Ltd listing the benefits of this liquid and listing stockists. In Leigh, Mr Brewer the grocer was listed.

The making of vinegar from dates is documented back to 5000BC in Babylonia. Date vinegar has a warm dark colour and a rich, fruity flavour. You use as you would a balsamic vinegar.

In 1896 there was a hard sell in the advertisement which listed the blessings of the New Date Vinegar.

To the uninitiated, vinegar made from dates ought to be a cordial. This, however, is not so. Victoria Date Vinegar has all the important dietetic properties belonging to malt or wine vinegar, and moreover, has a strength and delicacy of flavour peculiarly its own. The paleness of the colour might suggest deficiency of strength to ignorant persons. It would be easy to colour Victoria Date Vinegar artificially to any tint. The vinegar, however, would not be in the least improved in quality by being coloured, but in point of fact, less efficient for pickling purposes inasmuch as all matters in suspension would retard the action of the vinegar upon the vegetables. An advantage Victoria Date Vinegar possesses over ordinary vinegars is its absolute purity. The manufacture of ordinary vinegars and, consequently, almost all the vinegar in daily use contains sulphuric acid – an irritant which is exceedingly dangerous to health. Victoria Date Vinegar has been certified by the most eminent analysts of the day to be entirely free from injurious acids. It is sold at the same price as the ordinary vinegars, and should consequently, be used by everyone instead of the ordinary malt or wine vinegar.

Victoria Date Vinegar was hailed as the vinegar of the future and won a gold medal at the Universal Cookery and Food Exhibition in 1896. It does not appear to be advertised after 1899 although date vinegar is used widely in the Middle East. Given I still have ordinary malt and wine vinegar in my larder I assume it didn't catch on – unless someone knows different? Carole

NOTES FROM A SMALL ISLAND

On this island, where muddy creeks meet the salty marshland, you can forget the hurly-burly of urban life and observe at close quarters an eclectic mix of passerines, waders, seabirds and wild fowl. One minute you can be listening to the piping calls of an oystercatcher and the next hear the fluted tones of a blackcap. As skeins of geese depart in the eastern skies, heading for their summer nesting places, the hedgerows begin to pulsate with the fruity calls of sedge warblers. It's all happening and it's right on our doorstep!

Note One - Two Tree Island is one of the success stories of Leigh. It was originally reclaimed from the sea in the eighteenth century. In the 1960's it was largely used as a council landfill site but now it is managed by Essex Wildlife Trust. Under their tutelage it has evolved into a place of special interest and a must for all nature lovers. The 640 acre site is accessible at all times via a bridge and has reed beds, brackish lagoons, meadows, scrub and pasture land. The visitor is afforded extensive 180° views across the estuary. It is as popular today as it has ever been; with a wide range of interest groups including bird watchers, dog walkers, sailors, rambles and the local club for flying radio-controlled model planes. Nearby is a golf range, a skateboard park and parkland (in the 1970's there were football pitches, which I recall were always waterlogged!). What most people don't realise is that the warden, Mark, works voluntarily. It is testimony to his efforts and his band of hardy volunteers that the Island has become so popular with so many disparate groups and somehow achieved a satisfactory balance.

Note Two - There are four bird hides on the Island, two either side of the central car park. For those of us not blessed with encyclopaedic knowledge about birds, there are useful display boards in the western hides showing the types of birds likely to be seen. There's also a logbook used by 'twitchers' to record the number of birds they see. It's remarkable how many bird species visit this one location, because apart from the resident population there's a considerable mix of summer and winter migrants. The most celebrated winter migrants are the dark-bellied Brent geese. These hardy souls arrive in significant numbers (up to ten per cent of the world's population) during September, having spent the summer nesting on the tundra wastes of the Taimyr Peninsula in Northern Siberia. Waiting for favourable tailwinds they arrive in spectacular formations and land off the Island to feast on the native eelgrass. Once devoured, they move up the coastline around Essex and into Suffolk to feed on arable farmland.

Note Three - In ancient times it was the source of poison from which Socrates took his own life. Shakespeare refers to it in the third witch's incantations in *Macbeth*

'double, double toil and trouble'. It looks like parsley and its name derives from Anglo-Saxon meaning shore-plant and on the island its tall, slender stems sway above the fields and meadows like triflids. I'm referring, of course, to hemlock. The Island is full of it. Skylarks and thrushes are known to eat the fruit of the hemlock without adverse reaction but humans beware, all parts of the plant are toxic; from the root to the stem, from the leaves to the flowers. These days, hemlock is used for more efficacious purposes and it can be found in herbal curatives, relieving bronchitis and asthma. Ironically, its very toxicity means that it can act as an effective antidote to anyone desperate enough to have swallowed Strychnine.

Note Four - The pond at the north eastern end of the reserve used to be an old sewage works. Now it's home to an elusive bird that is usually gone in a flicker of electric blue: the kingfisher. This bejewelled bird is often talked about but rarely seen. Sometimes it helps to know where to look otherwise you'll flail around not quite sure what you're looking for. In winter time it hangs around the pond, attached to an overhanging branch or perched on a stake, not quite the idyllic, bucolic scene one imagines, but the kingfisher seems to like it.

Clive Webster



The components of Hemlock

Volunteers meet every second Sunday in the month at 10 a.m. outside the hut by the main entrance. We work for about three hours and there is a vital tea break at half time. We carry out a variety of tasks under the watchful gaze of vast Essex skies. If you enjoy bar-mowing, fence repairs, pond clearance and keeping the place tidy then this is the life for you! If it sounds interesting, then please come along wearing appropriate clothing. Just ask for Mark, the warden. And don't forget your thermos. If you wish to find more about the island go to: www.essexwt.org.uk/visitor_centres_nature_reserves/two_tree_island.

FROM ELIZABETH SHARP OF LEIGH



TO MAYOR OF GODALMING

Liz Wheatley, ex Leigh girl and Mayor of Godalming

It must have been in September 1950 that I started at St Michael's Church of England Convent School in Hadleigh Road and in September 1958 that I went to Westcliff High School for Girls until July 1965.

My early memories of living in Leigh are, quite literally, painful! There used to be a children's swimming pool, open to seawater, next to the proper baths and I barked my young shins so badly on hidden rocks, that, even now, I am wary of swimming in murky waters! I also remember cutting my feet badly on the cockle-shells buried in the soft mud. However, I loved the cockle sheds, especially when the various seafoods were being prepared. That smell is very evocative.

On Ascension Day the whole of St Michael's School would go by coach to Priory Park for a picnic. Somehow I mostly remember the weather's being fine.

My mother and I moved to Chalkwell when I was 5 to live with my grandparents, who had taken on the newsagents at the top of Beach Avenue. I used to enjoy sitting on the counter putting pennies in their piles of 12 and, as I got older, even being on call to stand in for any newspaper youngster who failed to turn up. The beach was down the hill and, in those days, there was the sailing boat always asking whether there were 'any more for the Skylark?' As I grew older and was expected to behave in a more sedate manner, we used to walk along to Hamlet Court Road with the lure of toasted tea-cake.

Often on Sunday morning my mother and I would wander along the Crowstone hard to the River Ray beyond. I'll never forget one Sunday morning walk on the pier: we were on the upper deck and I suddenly noticed one of the fence posts had painted on it: 'Don't Throw People Below.' We thought that was hilarious until we noticed another post further along which was marked: 'Don't Throw - People Below!' Then it made sense... What a difference punctuation makes!

We lived near Chalkwell Park. Initially, I used to act as ball-girl for my mother and her friends while they played tennis and would even watch David and John Lloyd having a practice, until I was old enough to have a go myself. Also, about 100 yards from the shop in Leigh Road was St Michael's Church where I spent a great deal of every Sunday. I joined their Amateur Dramatic Society and as I grew older I added ballroom dancing at Mimi Green's studio. One of my favourite places, though, was the Westcliff Palace Theatre. In the days of 'rep' it was fascinating to watch the performers play such a wide variety of rôles. It still is daunting to imagine their performing one play, rehearsing another and reading through a third! Another special place was the Cliffs Pavilion. Soon after it was opened several of the secondary schools joined together to perform Bach's St John's Passion which was a tremendous experience.

The day after my last 'A' level I went to work with my mother on her (dare I say?) fur trade magazine as the Advertisement 'Department'! After marriage and a family I resumed working with my mother, but due to the issues around the fur trade, my boss decided to indulge his hobby of collecting vintage cars and move to Surrey, so we moved to.

In 2007 I was asked if I would be willing to stand in the local elections, Although not expected to get elected, I found myself a member of both Godalming Town and Waverley Borough Councils. I had topped the poll and was elected by just 12 votes.

On 10th May, 2012 I became Town Mayor of Godalming. What a privilege that is, particularly in this year of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics. The Jubilee was something really special. We had 4 days of activities, including the carnival and Town Day. We were to be driven in a beautiful old white tourer. Unfortunately, we were positioned behind a wonderful African drumming band, which sashayed its way along the road – at a fraction of the speed of any normal marching band. As a result, our poor old tourer overheated and gave up the ghost! Luckily there was a truck at the rear of the procession belonging to the Guildford Heath basket ball team. This was duly brought forward as my conveyance, without any thought as to how I was to be hoisted into it! Fortunately, I was wearing a fullish skirted dress and managed to step onto the wheel (much higher than normal car wheels!) and haul myself aboard. Then like the Pied Piper of Hamelin we gradually lured the residents along the streets into the Town fair ground, I think the hilarity of the situation set the mark for the weekend! In the first 7 weeks into my term I attended 56 events. I am sure this is, without any exaggeration, sure to be a year to remember.

PITY THE POOR ROADSWEEPER

The Chelmsford Chronicle of 3 July 1896 reported that Councillor Harvey Moore (a well known resident, Victorian artist and leading light in the Town), had brought up the question of providing a waterproof for a roadman so that he could work when it was raining 'cats and dogs', if necessary.

Mr Watson – perhaps not such a leading light of Victorian politics in the town – asked if an umbrella would not do?

Mr Harvey Moore responded that 'yes it would, if he could hold it with his feet!' The mackintosh was ordered amidst gales of laughter.

MUCH BINDING IN THE MARSH

Knee-deep in squelching, oozing, strength-sapping estuarine mud might not be everyone's idea of enjoyment (it isn't mine, either) but it was the only way, we were told. So donning eye-catching rubberised chest-high waders, we trudged out across Two Tree Island towards our goal, the muddy creeks that scurry around the island at low tide. It was all part of the local wildlife trust's strategy to preserve our marshland. The approach is not to stem the tides - Canute had already tried that - it was more a case of anchoring the marshland, allowing the salty tides to past through, but not the silt-filled mudflats to pass out. Our job therefore was to 'shore up' until such time as the native plants established themselves.

Mudflats are the most productive and protein rich habitat in the U.K. They can host up to a thousand worms in a square metre and contain crustaceans and invertebrates. Eel grass, which attaches itself to the sediment, is much favoured by our most famous winter migrant, the dark-bellied Brent geese. Marshland often starts as mudflats and when these banks of sediment develop above the tidal flow, close to the shoreline they begin to change in shape and form. Gradually native plants begin to colonise, species like golden samphire, sea wormwood, sea aster, common and lax-flowered sea lavenders and sea purslane. As this process advances, the mudflats mutate into marshland providing valuable breeding grounds and shelter for waders and wildfowl. However, these fragile eco systems, which take decades to build up, can be washed away rapidly by strong tides.

So armed with faggots (bundles of hazel twigs) stakes and coils of twine we set to work, laying the faggots along the line of the tidal flow and tying them to the stakes which were driven deep into the mud. It sounds

straightforward, but it isn't, which probably explains why there are about twenty of us (mainly volunteers from Epping Forest Wildlife) allocated for a whole day to lay only about a hundred faggots. The sheer energy required to move around the glutinous mud is remarkable and just when you think you have gained equilibrium you realise you are stuck fast. The trick, as one experienced helper explained, is not to stand on the mud but to kneel, spreading one's weight over a larger surface area. So, in an act of supplication (well, it was a Sunday) I knelt down slowly and prostrated myself. 'Grab hold of the twine,' advised a disembodied voice from the other side of the faggot. 'I'm trying,' I replied. 'You need to go under the faggot,' my colleague continued, 'under!' So I grovelled even lower and plunged my hands deep under the faggot and into mud the colour of burnt sienna.

Soon my mouth and eyes were inches away from the primordial slime. As my fingers flapped helplessly searching for the twine, I ruminated on life, the universe and how this kind of terrain might be fine for worms and other invertebrates but is definitely not for humans. As my face descended further, I continued to ruminate, how much, I wondered, would an equivalent mud face pack cost in the beauty salons of West London?

Eventually I grabbed the muddy twine and pulled it through. Using several knots learnt from boyhood I secured it tight to the stake and then wrapped it around the faggot. Then I grabbed another faggot and laid it on top and secured that too. Two down, eighteen to go. The tractor came trundling along to deliver some more faggots and stakes. Where I wondered were the mushy peas?

I waded back down the creek to the river bank and began to ferry the materials out to my Epping Forest co-workers - I was more useful as a taxi service. As the rain came sheeting in, my colleagues stayed out on the mud, seemingly adapted to the treacherous conditions. They even appeared to be enjoying it – well it probably made a change from leafy forest floors and tree-hugging. As we slowly worked our way along, impaling stakes and binding faggots, we extended the low-rise structure all along the corridor of the intertidal creek. It wasn't exactly the Coolidge Dam but there was enough evidence to suggest we were making progress.

After three heart-pumping hours, I finally emerged. I landed on *terra firma*, dripping in slime from head to foot, like the Creature from the Black Lagoon. As I headed straight for the water bottles and washed myself down, I realised what a task it was. No wonder they only do it once a year. Then I tugged off my waders and found instant relief for my feet and toes. Before heading for home, I bid good day to the hardy band of volunteers

who were taking a quick sandwich break before going back out again to complete the job before the tide came swirling in.

For a morning I had communed with nature, much binding in the marsh. I had interacted with a natural part of our sea defences, slipping and sliding like a novice skater and, after much cursing and cussing in the squelching quagmire, had achieved minor success. Yet there was one other impression I took home with me: the smell, or rather the lack of it. Somehow I had expected my whole body to reek; impregnated with that kind of stench that lingers for days, a pong that makes you *persona non grata* in any public place. But it didn't. (Apparently it's only mud deep down that is rank and smelly, something to do with lack of oxygen). The only olfactory souvenir I took from the mudflats was a subtle, tangy, slightly fruity whiff. It actually smelt aromatic. This residual aroma sent my mind racing. Maybe I could capture it, bottle its essence? Then I could export it to the good people of London, back up river from whence it came, the ultimate in recycling. I've even got a name for it. *Eau de Île des Deux Arbres*, anyone?

Clive Webster

THE UNRULY VESTRY OF LEIGH

In England, until the 19th century, the parish vestry was responsible not only for church matters but all the other administrative requirements of lay business. Records of parish business were stored in a parish chest kept in the church and provided for security with three locks, the keys to which would be held by the vicar and the churchwardens.

Leigh was no different. The Vestry was made up of elected members from the Parish who dealt with parish matters. The rivalry between candidates in Leigh came to a head in March 1890 when the press reported on the 'disgraceful proceedings' of the Leigh Vestry.



"On Wednesday evening a meeting was held at Leigh to consider whether Messrs W H Harrison and Wm Harvey should be nominated overseers at the vestry meeting to be held on the following day in place of Messrs B W Barnard and T Tomlin. (*The parish was required to elect each Easter two "Overseers of the Poor" who were responsible for setting the poor rate, it's collection and the relief of those in need*).

Supporters of both parties attended in full force. Dr J Murie was to have taken the chair, but did not turn up as the opposing party had threatened 'to do for him'.

Mr J Cotgrove (Irene Cottage) mounted the platform, amid cheers and groans, and said that if the old overseers were to be turned out the men must not go out on the water on Thursday. This much said, he turned the gas off at the meter and the place was left in total darkness. Amid great din, he got the place cleared, and the row continued in the streets until a late hour.

On Thursday morning the place was in a state of ferment. Men went about the street jingling bells and carrying boards, inviting the public to vote for Barnard and Tomlin. The vestry meeting was to be held at eleven o'clock but before then several rows between the overseers and their opponents occurred on the streets. The vestry meeting was adjourned from the church to the boys' schoolroom. The Rev Canon King presided, and there was a large attendance. The Chairman not being able to quiet the meeting, said he had sent for a policeman the previous day. But he was sorry he was not present.

Mr H A King proposed, and Mr H Thompson seconded, that the old overseers be re-elected. Mr Foster proposed and Mr J Cotgrove seconded, that Mr Harrison be also appointed. While the last named was being proposed, a number of Mr Barnard's supporters created a most unseemly disturbance by kicking their feet on the floor and howling like wild beasts at the speakers.

Mr Barnard then commenced to speak, but was interrupted by 6 Mr Quilter, whereupon Mr Barnard called him a liar. Fifty three votes were given in favour of the old overseers and 64 against. At this announcement Mr Barnard got up, stamped his feet, waved his hands, and ground his teeth at one man who had voted against him.

Another man. Laughing at his gesticulations, called forth from Mr Barnard the following 'You dirty faced rascal, you voted against me.' During subsequent proceedings Mr Barnard acted in such a way that someone hinted that possibly he had lost his head. The latter jumped to his feet and rushed towards the speaker, calling him a dirty rascal and saying other things we cannot repeat. He was, however, kept back by his friends."

In 1894 the vestry meeting lost its civil functions and dealt with purely church matters as the Parochial Church Council. Civil parishes were established and, as today, we have parish and town councils.

LEIGH COMMUNITY CENTRE



For those of you who may not be aware, Leigh Town Council has taken over the management of the Leigh Community Centre in Elm Road.

The Town Council's aim is to bring the Centre back into the heart of the community and it is now taking bookings.

Become a Friend of Leigh Community Centre

The FRIENDS organisation will be a focus for activities and fund raising for the Centre. But the Town Council wants the FRIENDS organisation to be more than that – it is a way to bring people together, bringing the community together.

There will be a Community Centre Advisory Board made up of 2 Town Councillors (Carole is one of these) and representatives from local groups across the full range of potential community users. The Board will put forward ideas and proposals for consideration by the Town Council.

The Town Council wants to involve the whole community in this project and is looking for people across the town with whatever skills they may have, from professional expertise to organizing quizzes or wielding a paint brush, to join the FRIENDS who will organise and run fund raising events and help in practical terms where their time and skills are needed.

Carole is spearheading the Friends Project (as Chairman of the Town Council). So if you would like to join and help in the foundation of something to cement the community of Leigh please return the form to Carole at carole.mulroney@btinternet.com or send it in to the Town Council offices which are now in the Centre.

I would like to become a FRIEND of Leigh Community Centre

Name/Address

.....
.....

Email/Telephone.....

.....

I can offer assistance as follows

.....

I have particular expertise in

.....

Please copy if you want to keep your Leighway or pass the form on to friends.

When there are sufficient people there will be a meeting for an open discussion on how the FRIENDS can assist the project and to appoint a FRIENDship Partnership to oversee the work the FRIENDS undertake.

The Town Council has taken on a daunting task but is attacking it with gusto and needs everyone's support.

A SNIPPET FROM THE CENSUS

In the 1901 census the landlord of the Carlton was one William Nightingale, a publican from Hawkwell. With a name like Nightingale I suppose he could be forgiven for calling one of his daughters Florence. But to expose her to all the ribald comments there were likely to be in a pub was a bit cruel. Florence is a 22 year old barmaid at the pub in 1901 - let's hope she was made of as stern stuff as her namesake.

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. ©Leigh Society, Leigh Heritage Centre, 13A High Street, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 2EN