



Issue 3 - April 2000

# LEIGHWAY

The Newsletter of the Leigh Society

**An eye to the future and an ear to the past in the heart of Leigh**

### Business as usual

We're at that time of year when a young man's fancy turns to .....and a Leigh Society member comes to the AGM.

This has been a very eventful year for the Society with several changes in organisation and at last - the loo. But we cannot sit back on our laurels (or our 'throne') there is still more work to be done - and fun to be had. So this year, as ever, we need your support and encouragement.

The agenda for the AGMs for the Society, the Heritage Centre Ltd and the 2 Plumbs Yard Project Ltd are enclosed and all members are urged to come along on 26 April and take part in the proceedings. See you there

Ed



### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I am pleased to inform members that, despite a winter of other distractions such as Christmas, Millennium cavortings, flu, damp and windy weather, your Committee and the usual gang of helpers at the Heritage Centre have bravely beavered on. Thanks to one and all.

We now look forward to more balmy weather, and, of course, an Old Town full of visitors forming a long queue outside the Centre.

Other activities over the last year have involved the construction of the toilet (one helper was heard to comment that she had been waiting 17 years for this phenomenon).

A survey of 2 Plumbs Yard will be undertaken this year, and that the removal of the sheds and opening up of Strand Wharf, the relocation of Mike's Boatyard to Theobald's Wharf and the building of the new restaurant will probably make the Old Town the busiest place in Leigh. These developments will create a new 'centre' for the Old Town and the Heritage Centre and the Leigh Society will be at the heart of it. A real celebration for this Millennium Leap Year.

Yours Aye  
Frank Bentley.



### SECRETARY'S REPORT

I am pleased to say that after a somewhat uncertain start to 1999 the Society has entered the millennium on a very positive note.

Carole has taken over production of our newsletter, which has been very well received and, thanks to her and Lyn, production of both new and current leaflets and cards has been non-stop.

With Iris and Isobel doing the buying and Val managing the rota of helpers, the Heritage Centre has had a very successful year. Thanks go to all our helpers.

Thanks are also due to Ann for organising our outings and Christmas lunch all of which were great successes.

The loo construction has dominated the year but thanks to Leigh architect, Ron Cox, on both the plans and overseeing the work, the project is well under way. Leigh's answer to Cloche Merle! The opening ceremony will take place in due course!!

Southend Council have now demolished the two ugly sheds on Strand Wharf and views from the Heritage Centre across Leigh Creek and Marsh are now uninterrupted. An archaeological survey is also taking place.

Congratulations to Leigh Sailing Club on the improvements to their clubhouse facilities, which, through John Porter, are made available to our visiting school parties from time to time.

The 2 Plumbs Cottage Project Ltd was set up with Carole as company secretary and Donald Fraser as treasurer. The Company has charitable status. With the removal of the sheds the cottage is now very visible so we need to forge ahead and start fund raising to renovate it. We hope our members will lend their support and ideas. Cory's have offered £15,000 towards the works and we have to raise the rest.

With the enormous influx of visitors to the Old Town and school parties visiting the museum we were concerned about the poor state of the Bell Wharf toilets and have complained to the Council. Some work has been done.

Our meetings held at Wesley Church were well supported giving members and committee a chance to chat and exchange views.

We continue to keep an eye on events and plans as they affect both the Old Town and 'up the hill' and express our views on many of them.

Leigh is precious to it's residents and the Society hopes it reflects this.

Margaret Buckey



## HEALTHY HOCKLEY

The second in our series of interesting Essex places features Hockley and its short lived fame as a health spa.



Picture reproduced by courtesy of Essex Countryside and Essex Record Office

In the spring of 1838 Letitia and Robert Clay discovered a spring at Hockley, the waters of which they declared was so efficacious that they had cured Letitia's asthma.

After investigation of this claim by several eminent physicians 27 of them signed a pamphlet advocating the use of the waters of Hockley.

Hockley Spa was born when work began in 1842 to construct a pump room the decadence of which was later described by a visitor as being noble and lofty with a handsome counter surrounded by a marble slab and with a very elegant pump in the form of a Grecian temple.

Anticipating the influx of many visitors the Spa Hotel was built in 1843. The water was also bottled and sold in London from the Hockley Spa Water Depot in Cripplegate.

In 1848 the Spa warranted an eloquent entry in White's Directory in which the waters were claimed as a cure for gout, indigestion and inflammatory diseases, as well as asthma.

But Hockley's days of glory were numbered. It did not have the added attractions which could be found in Bath or Harrogate. In short there was nothing for the visitor to do.

By 1868 the Spa had been converted into a Baptist Chapel and the Hotel had become a beerhouse.

There were some vain attempts to revive it's fortunes in later years the last being by the Schweppes company between the wars. But all came to nought.

One interesting little anecdote recorded by Benton in his History of the Rochford Hundred is that of a man from the Dengie area who being unwell used to send his servant to Hockley to fetch the waters which in turn had a beneficial effect on the gentleman. He later found out, however, that his man had never made it beyond the Hawk at Battlesbridge and the healing waters had come from any available pump.

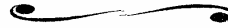


Source: Benton's History of the Rochford Hundred and A Brief Account of Hockley Spa by Richard Phillips

## A FISHY BUSINESS

H E R R I N G D A C E T  
I R M A E R B E L L T U  
S S U H C R E P R A W N  
S O L C L E E M K M H A  
A L L N N T N I E K I P  
B E E E U S I R W N T L  
N B T T W B L H H R E A  
O A T E I O E S C S B I  
M R D E N L E H A Q A C  
L C O C K L E O O U I E  
A R C A L A M A R I T X  
S K A T E D H L P D A B

COCKLE LOBSTER CALAMARI WHITEBAIT PIKE  
WINKLE COD SQUID PERCH PLAICE WHELK EEL  
SHRIMP TENCH HUSS CRAB DACE PRAWN HAKE  
MULLET BREAM SOLE ROE CLAM BASS  
HERRING ROACH SALMON TUNA SKATE SHOAL  
NET LINE DAB



## PEJO PEJO PEJO

In February the old town welcomed back a familiar face on a return trip from down under.

Ron Kerr, or PC 182 as he was known, patrolled the old town in the 60s and reminisces:

'I could tell you about the time another PC (no names no pack drill), myself and a traffic warden were all on duty trying to keep the traffic moving one hot holiday weekend at the height of the summer. Then, as now, one parked car could cause chaos, so it was a case of keep 'em moving.

The other PC and myself were at each end of the High Street and the Traffic Warden was moving in between. Suddenly I became aware that the Traffic Warden had gone missing and when I got the opportunity I put my concern to my colleague. He advised me that Mine Host of the Crooked Billet was so concerned that he and the Warden might suffer from dehydration that he had forced some libation on them. It appears that the Warden had had an excess so 'I put him in a taxi and sent him home' said my colleague. We managed the rest of the shift without him and no one ever noticed.

I could also tell you of the many times I came home with a bag of prawns in my helmet, compliments of Mr Osborne. Very useful those helmets. I also used the same technique to carry cream buns from the bakery in the Broadway for breakfast.

I always enjoyed working the old town, the people there always appreciated our efforts at keeping the traffic moving and the trouble makers in their place.'

Ron Kerr (ex PC 182)  
Canberra, Australia





Coat of Arms of the Company of Lightermen and Watermen of the River Thames

### ONLY A ROSE

In the last edition of Leighway we told the story of Doggett's Coat and Badge. This edition we have another interesting custom associated with the Company of Watermen and Lightermen of the River Thames - **Knollys Rose**

Since 1381 a red rose has been presented to the Corporation of the City of London as a payment which was imposed in that year on Sir Robert Knollys in exchange for permission to build a footbridge across Seething Lane.

There is no bridge now but the legal requirement continues and forms an annual ceremony.

Sir Robert Knollys was a prominent citizen of London and assisted in the suppression of the Peasant's Revolt. For this service he was granted the Manor of St Pancras.

Among Sir Robert's many properties in the City was a house on the west side of 'Syvendenlane' now Seething Lane. His wife, Constance, is reputed to have bought a piece of land on the east side of the Lane and built a footbridge over the Lane from the house to her garden on the other side.

No 'planning permission' having been given for this structure a fine was imposed by the City Corporation of one red rose payable each year on the Feast of St John the Baptist (24 June). For this payment permission was given for a 'hautpas, of the height of 14 feet across the road.

The present day ceremony takes place at Mansion House where the Chief Escort to the Rose - the Master of the Company of Watermen and Lightermen - presents a red rose to the Lord Mayor. The rose is picked from the Corporation's garden in Seething Lane on the site of the Knollys property.

The rose is presented on an altar cushion carried by the vergier of All Hallows-by-the-Tower.



Information and Coat of Arms supplied and reproduced by kind permission of the Company of Watermen and Lightermen of the River Thames



### Planning Applications

The Society has considered a number of planning applications over the last few months and has commented accordingly. We are very lucky to have Frank Bentley, who, as a former Planning Officer for the City of London, brings a wealth of experience to this task.

The most significant application we have considered recently was for refurbishment and alterations to the Old School House on Church Hill. We considered that the proposals were to a good standard and did not detract from the property and, therefore, raised no objection.

### GOINGS ON IN BELFAIRS PARK



AA fire

Early one morning in 1943/4 a train arrived at Leigh Station. The travellers had boarded up north the night before for an unknown destination - a heavy mixed AA Battery sent to help defend against the expected arrival of Hitler's secret weapon.

Imagine the surprise of one who had lived all her life in Westcliff and was now on her own doorstep. A request for such a posting would have had no hope.

Next stop Belfairs Park where I phoned home to say I would be visiting soon. We had Nissen huts on both sides of the main path, and when the alarm went, usually at night, we fell into trousers, boots, tin hats and battledress top and ran like mad to the Command Post - a concrete affair which sheltered the instruments manned by the girls - complete with pyjamas and curlers protruding - very fetching!

The 3.7in guns were manned by the men on information from the Command Post so our role was vital.

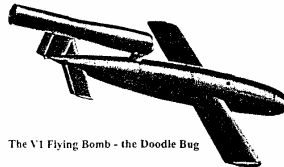
After a number of false alarms and stand downs, we had orders one morning to take cover and dutifully fell into trenches listening for a noisy and faltering motorbike. Then our first sight of a 'doodle bug' flying low, and as we watched the engine cut out and it went down with a clump over Rayleigh.

Our occupation of Belfairs was useless as we could not risk bringing the V1s down on the town, so we packed up and were moved out to Foulness, on a far point - one small farmhouse, one tap in a field, a full battery and no Command Post or gun emplacements.

Within 24 hours we were in action, guns on railway sleepers and Command Post an open ended elephant hut and troops in tented camp. But all that is another story.

I missed my trips home riding pillion on a motorbike.

Mrs Gwen Eastwood - now a Leigh resident - was a Subaltern in the A.T.S. stationed in Leeds - before being posted to Leigh



The V1 Flying Bomb - the Doodle Bug

The V1 Flying Bomb had a span of 16 feet and an overall length of 25 feet. It weighed 2 tons including fuel and war heads and had a maximum range of 250 miles. Between 1944 and 1945 about 10,500 V1s were launched at Britain from ramps or aircraft.

## ON THE RUN FROM THE REVENUE



The Customs House at Leigh

The following letter dated 6 January 1872 from the Customs Officer at Maldon to the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade shows how the men of Leigh supplemented their animal pickings from the sea with those of a mineral nature.

Honourable Sirs

I beg to report that sometime ago my attention was directed to the fact that coals were plundered by the Leigh fisherman from coal laden vessels in the Thames, and I then gave instructions to the Principal Coast Officer and Coast Guard at Leigh that any vessel arriving with cargo and without a transit\* should forthwith be reported to me and detained until your Honours pleasure should be known. I have since then made enquiry regarding this nefarious practice but so far no case has come under the notice of the PCO or Coast Guard. It is known to the fishermen that they are watched and that will deter them for a time. I may however state that Leigh offers peculiar facilities for such practices. These fishermen come crowding in from the sea on the tide so that the Coast Guard boat cannot board half of them, they moor their vessels at their back doors and as there is no patrol in that locality they may safely discharge into their own houses any plundered or contraband goods they may possess. That there has been plundered goods bought there admits of no doubt and the remedy for this evil lies with the Coast Guard who to afford the necessary protection should keep a patrol night and day on that part of Leigh occupied by the fishermen but the present staff at Leigh is quite inadequate for that purpose.'

\* A permit for the passage of goods issued by Customs

A hundred or so years earlier in 1781 a sale at Leigh customs house of contraband items and boats seized from smugglers included 680 gallons of geneva(gin), 82 gallons of brandy, 47 of rum, 275 quarters of port, 28 of 'lisbon', 120 of claret, 33 yards of calico, much foreign china, together with a sloop and small sailing boat.

In 1786, John Loten the Customs Officer reported that he knew of at least 10 local boats engaged in smuggling. In 1802, James Baxter, his successor, noted in his diary that he had made a seizure, large or small, of one kind or another, on each day of the month of July.

## BROTHERS IN ARMS

The First World War has always had the power to evoke strong passion - lives torn apart - the loss of a generation of young men and their promise.



Some families knew tragedy more than once. One such was the Carey family of 6 The Broadway, Leigh-on-Sea (so far as can be seen not related to the Old Leigh Carey family).

In 1914 two sons of Robert Falkland Carey and his wife Agnes Maud enlisted for King and Country.

John Arber Carey joined the Finsbury Rifles and served in Palestine. He went missing in the Bay of Gorla and was reported killed on 19 April 1917. His name appears on the Jerusalem Memorial. He was just 19.

His older brother Robert Arber Frederick Carey had joined the Royal Garrison Artillery and had attained the rank of Lance Corporal.

Robert fought at Givenchy and was offered a King's Commission for bravery in the field as a result of a ballot of the men, but he turned it down on account of his age.

Whilst serving with the 1/20th City of London Regiment at Givenchy, he was one of three survivors of a platoon, originally of 64, which held a 120 yard trench for a couple of days. On no less than three occasions Robert climbed up the parapets to fetch bombs under heavy fire. He also brought in a number of men from open ground under fire and rescued a wounded comrade.

His General recommended Robert for a Victoria Cross. This same general died the week after he had made the recommendation and Robert was one of his pall bearers - the only non commissioned representative.

Robert wrote of Givenchy to his parents 'Since I wrote to you last I have been through hell. I can't get the cries out of my ears, night or day; the cries for stretcher bearers that never came. Afterwards the colonel called me up and said he was proud of me and had sent my name up to the general.'

Robert was not awarded the Victoria Cross but was given the Distinguished Conduct Medal - the next highest honour.



Sadly Robert fell victim to blood poisoning whilst in France and died at Kensington on 25 July 1918 aged 22. He is buried in Merton Parish Church.

Robert had attained the rank of 2nd Lieutenant.

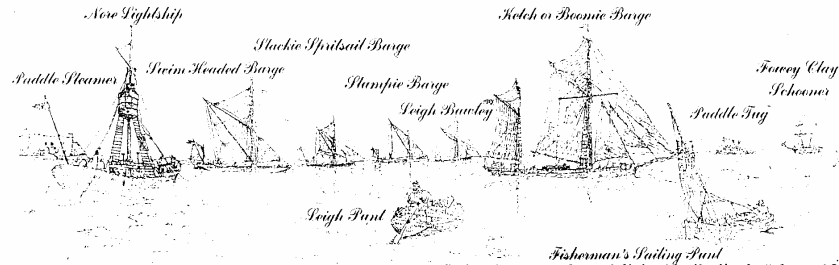
Brigadier General Hubbock wrote to his parents. 'I am very sorry to hear of your son's death. He was such a gallant boy that I am certain he would have done splendidly as an officer and a leader of men.'

Sources: Commonwealth War Graves Debt of Honour Register and Burrows Roll of Honour for Southend

The picture shows a DCM, that won by Robert would have borne the head of George V

## SHIPPING NEWS C1900

The Thames Estuary has always been a busy shipping lane with a variety of vessels making their way up or down stream. Drawing and information by Frank Bentley



**Thames Sailing Barge** - These unique vessels operated and developed over the mid 19th to mid 20th century and were adapted to carry all manner of cargo - building materials, sand, hay and agricultural produce. Usually crewed by 2 men and a boy, including sometimes the Skipper's wife, they were flat-bottomed craft with lee boards instead of a fixed keel. They could operate at sea, mainly off the Kent and East Anglian coasts, but also to the continent and south coast. Most Essex barges had long bowsprits and tall topmasts, all of which could be housed down to negotiate the London bridges. Much trading was done between London and the east coast ports and the many tidal rivers and hamlets. After the last war commercial trading disappeared and the remaining barges (some of them built at the turn of the last century) joined the leisure industry. Some can still be seen around the Estuary and coast, in particular at Maldon, and at annual barge races in the Estuary, Medway and at London.

**Sprintsail Barge** - Named after the large diagonal boom which holds up the reddish/brown mainsail. Essex barges usually had the long bowsprits whereas Kent ones did not. All had a mizzen mast/sail and up to 3 headsails. They could carry about 150 tons of cargo and in later years some were fitted with auxilliary engines.

**Swim Headed Barge** - A very early form of sailing barge, the term refers to the diagonal flat bow (nowadays seen on Thames 'dumb' lighters). They sometimes had a long timber tiller, instead of a wheel.

**Stackie Sprintsail Barge** - This vessel had additional sails which allowed the barge to negotiate the London bridges when carrying a stack of hay/straw. They were extensively used when London operated hundreds of work horses.

**Boomie Barge** - These vessels were much larger than the sprintsail barges and were ketch rigged. They traded to the continent and English ports. They had lee boards in lieu of a fixed keel.

**Stumpie Barge** - This sailing barge had no topmast or topsail, usually a smaller vessel.

**Leigh Punt** - A large 'clinker' built dinghy-about 19ft long, fitted with a lugsail and used for ferrying fish etc from the Bawleys to shore in the deep water Ray Channel. They could be sailed, rowed or sculled (over the stern) often steered with an oar.

**Fowey Clay Schooner** - These vessels brought China clay from Fowey in Cornwall to the Victoria Pottery in Leigh.

**Nore Light-ship** - A famous old vessel, no longer on station, which indicated the entrance to the Thames Estuary. Now in St Katherine's Dock near the Tower of London.

**Paddle Steamer** - There were many of these passenger ships at the turn of the last century and they continued to ply their trade up to the last war. Most trips operated from London to the Channel and east coast ports and the continent. Nowadays only two visit the Thames annually, the Waverley and the Kingsdown Castle, which have been maintained by preservation societies.

**Paddle Tug** - These were quite common and two such vessels were operated from Sheerness and Chatham naval bases. It is believed they still existed in pre-war years.

**Leigh Bawley** - These vessels have worked out of Leigh from early Victorian times and evolved from the Peterboat (a maid of all work carrying goods over the tidal Thames and Estuary). This boat was sailed and rowed and was 'double-ended' i.e. both ends pointed. In time the stern was 'squared' and the boat enlarged until it became the hull shape. They were timber (carvel) built with a smooth finish known as 'plank on edge' (the Peterboat was 'clinker' built (overlapping planks)). The sailing Bawley was cutter rigged, with a large loose footed mainsail, a tall topmast and topsail, and up to 3 headsails. They were of shallow draft and able to sit upright on the offshore banks. They had a shallow keel and were broad beamed with low topsides, a long bowsprit and long timber tiller close to the deck, mostly steered between the helmsman's feet. Bawleys were used for catching cockles, shrimps, whitebait etc. After the last war most were engine driven and sails were dispensed with. In recent years they have been replaced by steel boats with suction equipment for cockling instead of hand rakes.

## WE'RE ALL DOOMED

Most of you will know of the existence of the so called 'Doom' pond in Leigh Road - still visible through the fencing.



But why is it known by that name, is it literally 'doomed'? The dictionary definition of doomed is 'condemned to misfortune' and so the name fits quite appropriately if you're a supermarket operator or a builder.

But what are its real origins? According to Canon King, in 1862 there were only four houses at the top of the hill and to the east stood the potteries just beyond the site of the Grand Hotel. As Lyn Davies mentioned in her article in the last edition of Leighway, the pottery employed a large number of people, many of them boys. Close to the pottery were two large ponds one of which the pottery boys fished in for sticklebacks. The other was 60 feet deep in places and with no residents to view their escapades the boys used this for swimming.

The pottery boys also used to perform a 'pottery roll' going down the hill sweeping along with them anyone who got in their way. If anyone can describe this 'pottery roll' to us we would be delighted to hear from them.



But back to Doom pond. The pottery obviously needed a kiln for firing its wares a mighty structure as can be seen from this picture.

It also needed a water supply. Doom pond is also called the Pottery pond and that is exactly what it was - for the huge kiln was called the 'Doom'.

Source: Notes of Canon Walker King as recorded in a local newspaper in the 1930s

If anyone can describe the 'pottery roll' we'd be pleased to hear from them

## KEEP THE PRESSES ROLLING

The interests of Society members are many and varied and we want Leighway to reflect that. So if you have an interesting story or photograph connected to Leigh or can concoct a Leigh based puzzle I would love to hear from you. You can contact me via the Heritage Centre, by post to 27 North Dell, Chelmsford, CM1 6UP, by phone 01245 467849 (evenings) or by e-mail palmtree@northdell.demon.co.uk. The next edition will be in September and contributions should be with me by 10 August. But let me know in advance so I can keep space for it.

Carole Pavitt

## LEIGH IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA

If you search through the burial registers of St Clement's Church you will find several entries for the various ills which carried people off in the 19th Century. Scarlet Fever, Whooping Cough, Smallpox and Cholera.

In 1832 cholera was abroad in the country as a whole, brought in through the coastal ports through trade with countries where the disease was endemic.

The register for that year records only one such death in Leigh, but it is a very interesting entry.

'30 March 1832 - Alexander Ritchie aged 11 - supposed to have died of the English Cholera Morbus in consequence of taking up cloathes which were tied up in a hammock and sunk. Soon after he had put on a hat he was seiz'd with a dierrhea and died in a few hours' In 1849 there was another outbreak, this time more serious. The disease was Asiatic Cholera and between August and September 17 people succumbed to the terrible disease.

In 1866 the disease struck again. In the summer months in London there were over 1200 deaths and between 26 August and 9 September in Leigh there were 11 deaths with at one point 64 people in one week being afflicted. All but one of the deaths were in the Old Town. There were eight cases in Alley Dock alone, six of them proving fatal.

Extreme measures had to be taken and at a cost of £84 a drain was laid and a temporary laundry was set up with two women employed to launder the linen. This was paid for out of the Church offertory. Beds were burned in an effort to stem the spread of infection. The owners were paid compensation out of the parish rate.

Finally, the disease abated and a service of thanksgiving was held. Within days, however, there was an outbreak of whooping cough which claimed another 7 lives.

Source: Notes of Canon Walker King as recorded in a local newspaper in the 1930s



## LEIGH'S INDIANA JONES



Everyone loves a good 'Boy's Own' adventure story and Leigh has one of its own.

Andrew Battell doesn't feature with your Drakes or Raleighs, he is not one of the great Elizabethan adventurers, but he has, nevertheless, an exciting tale to tell.

On 20th April 1589 two ships set sail from the Thames bound for adventure, and possibly piracy. The May Morning and the Dolphin were under the command of Captain Abraham Cocke of Limehouse.

After putting in at Plymouth the two ships set off along the Spanish coast and on to Guinea. Aboard one of the ships was Andrew Battell of Leigh.

After crossing the Atlantic the ships made for San Sebastian at the toe of Argentina where they intended to revictual, but things did not go according to plan. The crew were attacked by natives and whilst Captain Cocke and most of the crew escaped with the two ships, Andrew and 4 others were taken captive to Rio de Janeiro.

Eventually they were sent to Africa where Andrew fell ill for some time. On his recovery he managed to board a Dutch ship to make his escape but was recaptured and banished for life to a Portuguese fort in the interior. He was left to languish there for six years all the while trying to find a means of escape. Eventually he and some other prisoners managed to steal a canoe and made off down river where they disembarked and entered the jungle where the heat was intense and their only means of survival was to extract the moisture from the roots of small trees.

In time they met an old native man who under the guise of offering them hospitality took them back to his village but they soon realised they were still in danger and managed to make a quick getaway.

After much travail they were attacked and captured by the Portuguese again. White men were needed to quell the rebellious natives and Andrew ended up as a soldier for the Portuguese and trading for their government.

During this time he is believed to be the first white man to have seen the Congo pygmies.

All in all his trials and tribulations lasted 18 years and on his return to England he related his adventures to Samuel Purchas, the then Vicar of Eastwood, who records them in great detail in Purchas his Pilgrimes.

These Pilgrimes run to a 20 volume record of all the major sea voyages of all nationalities undertaken from ancient times to the 1620s. A scintillating read if you can spare a couple of decades.

## CONSERVING OUR HERITAGE

Conservation Areas are designated by the local authority after they have appraised the area for special features which they consider it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Consent is needed before a building or part of a building can be demolished, hence the curious need for consent to demolish the sheds on Strand Wharf.

In a Conservation Area the Council is concerned with the external effect of works on both the building and its environment. Much minor work which would not require planning permission outside a Conservation Area does need permission within one, i.e. some cladding, insertion of dormer windows or erection of satellite antenna.

Trees in Conservation Areas may be covered by preservation orders but even those which aren't are protected and 6 weeks notice has to be given to the Council of an intention to lop, top or fell. This allows the Council time to consider whether the tree should be preserved.

The Society is a consultee in respect of applications within the three Leigh conservation areas and responds on a regular basis to consultations. The more significant applications are later reported in Leighway.

## ISLE of WIGHT

Ann Price, our intrepid outings organiser, is considering organising a residential trip to the Isle of Wight next year, if there is sufficient interest. This would be in May 2001.

The trip would be 5 days (4 nights), by coach, staying in a well equipped, attractive hotel, with heated swimming pool, looking out over Shanklin Bay.

The cost would be approximately £200 and would include half board, coach travel (including visits around the Island), but not lunches or entry to sites etc.

If any member thinks they might be seriously interested (but no obligation at this stage) would they please contact Ann either by telephone -

01702 710324 or

note to 15 Henry

Drive, Leigh-on-Sea,

SS9 3QQ or via the

Heritage Centre. Ann

will then be able to

judge whether to

proceed with the idea.



Winkle Street

If sufficient interest is shown details will appear in the Autumn Leighway.

## AROUND THE WORLD IN 365 DAYS



The popularity of Leigh spreads far and wide. In 1999 in the region of 40,000 people visited the Heritage Centre, ranging from locals who come back time and again, to people from all over the UK and beyond. During 1999 we received visitors from the following countries:

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, China, Cyprus, Denmark, Eire, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Goa, Greece, Holland, Hungary, India, Iran, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Kosova, Latvia, Malta, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tenerife, Turkey, USA, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Zululand.

Grand total 53.

We now have a world map in the Heritage Centre and invite our visitors to place a sticker on their country if they are the first to find us.



Sometime in the late 1950s/early 60s a meeting was held in the area where a Professor was to give some information about the Harridge Family 'fortune'. Members of the family were invited with the promise that they may find out something to their advantage, Paul Harridge of Woodford Green remembers the meeting being called but his family could not attend because a real 'pea souper' came down and prevented them travelling to Leigh.

Paul is trying to find out what happened at the meeting. Does anyone, be they connected to the Harridge family or not, have any recollection of this meeting being held or any other information.

If you do please let Carole Pavitt know via the Heritage Centre and she will pass the information on to Paul.

## DEAR DIARY



|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 26 April        | AGM (members only) followed by Bottles and Jars an illustrated talk by Neil Smith |
| 10 May          | Trip to Canterbury  |
| 17 May          | Hatch, Match, Scratch and Dispatch by Carole Pavitt                               |
| June            | Leigh Art Trail - there will be an exhibition in the Heritage Centre              |
| 16/17 September | Old Leigh Regatta   |
| 18 October      | The History of the City of London Sue Sincock, City of London Guide               |
| 15 November     | Vic Ellis' Paintings by Bob Clark   |

## CHARACTERS OF OLD LEIGH



**Churchie Deal**  
1832-1913

Churchie Deal was actually Joseph Deal, a Leigh fisherman, fishmonger and well known local inhabitant. Churchie, so the story goes, got his nickname from being caught as a child breaking into St Clement's Church.

He did not come from Leigh but was taken in by a Leigh family, his parents', possibly travellers, whereabouts being unknown.

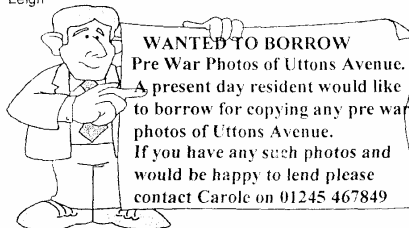
Obviously frightened and tongue tied when he was caught the only thing he would say was Deal and no one knew whether that was his name or the place he came from.

After some research for a Deal descendant in America, Churchie has been traced back to his birth in 1832 in Sible Hedingham, near Halstead. There was a largish Deal family there at the time but Churchie seems to be the only child born to James and Betsy Deal in the village, so it looks as if they did move from the village and wandered, presumably looking for work, but why they abandoned Churchie in Leigh is not known.

Churchie went on to found a dynasty in Leigh with an estimated 100 descendants at the time of his death.

Churchie married Eliza Boyton the aunt of Ponto Boyton, who will be the next Character of Old Leigh.

Sources: Legends of Leigh by Sheila Pitt-Stanley, Parish registers of Leigh and Sible Hedingham and census returns for Leigh



The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the committee and officers of the Society

We rather hope you will keep your Leighway but if not please recycle it



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