



Issue 1 - September 1999

LEIGHWAY

The Newsletter of the Leigh Society

WELCOME

Welcome to this, the first issue of the new look newsletter

LEIGHWAY

The aim of the Newsletter is to tell members what's happening within the Society and keep you informed of forthcoming events and ventures.

We hope in coming issues to have guest writers on their memories of Leigh or topics of interest.

We would also welcome articles from members. So put your thinking caps on.

The newsletter is published twice a year so the next issue will be in January which will be a special Millennium edition.



THE COMMITTEE

President: Sheila Pitt-Stanley

V/Presidents: David Atkinson MP, Alan Crystall,

Rev Steven Jones, Joan Foyster

Chairman: Frank Bentley

V/Chairman: Elaine Crystall

Secretary: Margaret Buckley

Treasurer: Judith Coombs

Members: Stuart Brewer, Cathy Cottridge, Alan Crystall, Lyn Davies, Kim De Neumann, Carole Pavitt, Sheila Pitt-Stanley, Ann Price and Iris Williams.

With special thanks to:

Accounts: Judith Coombs

Outings: Ann Price

Heritage Centre Rota: Val Hulme

Heritage Centre Stock Control - Iris Williams

Publications: Lyn Davies

and all the ladies and gentlemen who help man the Heritage Centre, give talks to parties and help in all manner of ways.

And if you don't like the new newsletter you can blame me Carole Pavitt



WHY WE ARE HERE

We thought this would be an ideal opportunity to remind every one of the aims of the Society and its related Companies.

The Leigh Society

The aim of the Society is to promote high standards of planning and architecture in the Leigh Conservation Areas and to secure the preservation of features of historic and public interest.

The Leigh Heritage Centre Ltd

The aims of the company are:-

the provision and maintenance of a museum in the Old Leigh Conservation Area for the advancement of the education of the public and for the exhibition to the public of objects, documents, photographs and any other items whatsoever connected with the history of the town of Leigh-on-Sea;

to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of public architectural and historical interest in the Conservation Area of Old Leigh and Leigh-on-Sea; and

to promote high standards of planning and architecture in or affecting those areas.

The 3 conservation areas are Leigh Town, Old Leigh and Leigh Cliff.

2 Plumbs Yard Project

The aim of the project is the refurbishment, protection and maintenance of a 19th century fisherman's cottage, furnished with artefacts appropriate to the period, for the advancement of the education of the public and for the exhibition to the public of objects, documents, photographs and any other items whatsoever directly associated with the building.

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

We will shortly have some new publications in the Heritage Centre which members will find of interest.

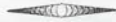
1. Michael Tomlin - Fisher of Men by S.F. Johnson reprinted by kind permission of Harold 'Babe' Johnson, son of the late S.F. Johnson - £1
2. The Metropolis of Shrimps - Article from an issue of the New Penny Magazine of 1899 -20p
3. At the Going Down of the Sun - Leigh entries extracted from Burrows Roll of Honour for Leigh-on-Sea 1914 -18 and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Debt of Honour Register for both World Wars - £1



ON THE RACK

We desperately need to display our publications in a more presentable fashion in the Heritage Centre. If you have, or know of a business, which no longer has need of a free standing magazine rack and would be willing to donate it to a worthy cause, please get in touch with the Heritage Centre.

Having the booklets in a more readily accessible position will free the counter tops from clutter and make it easier for customers to see exactly what we are selling and exhibiting.



Find the family

O E M E B H C N E D D J
 S Y E V R A H F R E Q O
 B A D R I N J O Y G E H
 A O D Z D H V R F D N N
 X N L T G R R D R I R S
 C O E I E E L K O N O O
 E M E D K M O N Q R B N
 L L N O A K E S O U S O
 L A E D E V O R G T O C
 V S W I L D E R Y R T W
 D S E N Y L E C S O J U

- Axcell Bridge Cotgrove Dench
 Emery Ford Harvey Johnson
 Joscelyne Kerry Leigh Meddle
 Noakes Osborne Salmon
 Turnidge Utton Vandervord Wilder



DIDN'T WE HAVE A LOVELY DAY, THE DAY WE WENT TO WINDSOR ?

A glorious day with a pleasant drive and an amiable driver. Add to that a fly past by Concord, marching bands, shopping and of course the Castle itself, and you have a great day out.

The Castle Wardens were keen to pass on their knowledge and the Castle looked glorious in both its old and new 'gowns'. The town was not too busy, being early in the season, but nevertheless was bright and bustling. Whether eating in or alfresco in the Castle grounds, a good day was had by all and our driver, who brought his bicycle with him, was able to train for a triathlon whilst we soaked up the scenery.

Many thanks to Ann Price for organising such an enjoyable day out.



TOP OF THE FORM

Quiz Night Winning Team



A big thank you to Val and Mavis for all their hard work and to the Sea Scouts for the use of the Den

THE CROWSTONE

The origin of the name "Crowstone" is uncertain but in 1746 one Roger Griffiths wrote

"A little below yhis island (Canvey) or rather opposite to the lower End of it is a small Town called Leigh, of little or no Account, otherwise than it is well stocked with Fishermen and Seamen, and likewise that about two Mile below this Town, the Jurisdiction of London on the Essex Side of the River, terminates at a Place called Crowstone, where there was a Mark Stone, but by some Accident it has now been lost for these several years past."

THE OLD STONE

The earlier post-Griffiths stone was about eight feet in height and made of Portland Stone. There is no record of the date of its erection but it must have been after 1746, and perhaps before 1771, the earliest of the recorded dates of ceremonial visits.

The date 1285 originally inscribed at the top of the stone indicated the year in which the powers and rights of the jurisdiction of the Thames were granted to the City of London by Edward I. Other known inscriptions included the shield of the armorials of the City of London and details of the Lord Mayors who made ceremonial visits between 1771 and 1835



The Crowstone taken in the 1930s and reproduced by kind permission of Mrs B Taylor of Ramsden Heath whose grandfather was the photographer.

THE PRESENT STONE

The present stone is made of granite and about 16ft in height. It was erected in 1836 and there were inscriptions on three of the faces, recording the occasions of ceremonial visits to the stone and the names of the officials who were present at the last such visit in 1856. The small holes pierced near the top of each face of the stone were probably to hold the shafts of banners on such occasions.

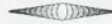
The two stones stood together on the shore (as in the above picture) until 1950 when the older stone was removed to Priory Park.

THE CEREMONIAL VISITS

Ceremonial visits to all the mark stones were made at approximately seven yearly intervals by the Lord Mayor of London and his officials. Altogether 13 of these visits to the Crowstone are recorded, the first in 1771 and the last in 1856, after which date the control of the Thames passed to the Thames Conservancy Board.

The Lord Mayor and his party came by paddle steamer from Greenwich, landing at Southend. The most important visitors were put up at the Royal Hotel where there was a dinner followed by dancing and fireworks displays on the cliffs. The following day the party drove in carriages to the Crowstone where a ceremony took place. Each of these visits was recorded on the stones. Afterwards the party returned to the steamer and travelled to Rochester for a similar ceremony there

From the notes of the late Joyce MacConnell



CHARACTERS OF OLD LEIGH



Robert Johnson

1840-1925

Many of you will have seen this picture in the Heritage Centre. It is of Robert Johnson, known as 'Skipper', a well respected Leigh fisherman who died in 1925.

Robert was the father of S.F. Johnson who was Mayor of Southend, and the great grandfather of Lyn Davies.

What you may not have noticed is that Robert is wearing a gold earring. Lyn tells us that this was a tradition among the fisherman. The reason was that if they died at sea and were washed up on a strange shore the local parish would be able to use the earring to pay for their funeral.

The St Clement's registers have several burials of 'a man found drowned' no doubt paid for by a gold earring.

It just goes to show what goes around comes around.

THE PETERBOAT - NOT JUST A PUB

There has been a Peterboat in Leigh since before 1695 when it was owned by the Osborne family. It was still in their ownership in 1847 when the Tithes map shows it to be owned by John Osborne and occupied by John Hulton (probably Hutton) and Mrs Quilter.

By the 1851 census the landlord was John Hutton who had come from 'Brewsyard' in Suffolk. An appropriate misspelling by the census enumerator of Bruisyard near Framlingham. John had taken Isabella Emery as his second wife. John's family name was to evolve over the years to become Utton, hence Uttons Avenue.

By 1891, having passed through Robinson, Bayford and Surridge hands, the landlord was a Richard Stammers who had come from Tillingham on the Dengie peninsula.

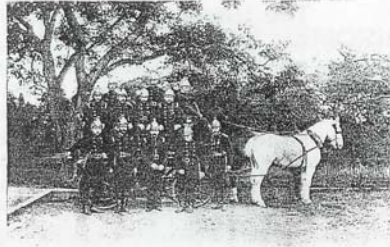


The Peterboat before the fire

It is the following year, 1892, when the Peterboat hit the headlines. It was a Sunday night, 2nd October, when the pub caught fire rapidly spreading to adjoining properties in the High Street.

Mr Brewer raised the alarm at 11 p.m. by riding bareback to Southend to rouse the fire brigade who came with their new steam engine 'The Alert' on its first outing.

The Peterboat was timber built and difficult to get to but the fireman had the blaze out by 6.15 Monday morning. The pub had been practically destroyed. The total loss including damage to the Red House and Carey's House was £2,200 (about £110,000 today).



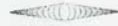
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA FIRE BRIGADE, 1891

The fire brigade managed to salvage one moment from the pub - a plum pudding.

But that was not the end of the story for a large underground room was discovered, adjoining Alley Dock, with an entrance to the water and evidence of contraband activities. H.N. Bride records that there was a narrow path leading from Alley Dock up the hill and across country to Daws Heath, a haunt of highwaymen, and it was thought that brandy and tobacco were taken there with the help of Leigh fishermen.

A smuggler in the family - now there's a thought.

Sources - Old Leigh by H.N. Bride; Old Leigh by Rev Bundoock; Southend-on-Sea Volunteer Fire Brigade Jubilee 1927 (with thanks to Lyn Davies)



A Home for Emma



We are very pleased to announce that we now have the 'EMMA' on display in the Heritage Centre by kind permission of Mr Frank Taylor of Ashford who made this splendid model.

The real Emma was built in 1899 by A White of Milton, Kent and, after carrying cement, she was sold for the princely sum of £50 to W H Theobald of Leigh. She later became a motor barge, yacht and a houseboat.

There are more fascinating facts about the Emma in the Heritage Centre so please make an effort to go down and take a look.

The Josselyn Society

On 10 April Leigh received a visit from the Josselyn Society. In the morning they were shown around St Clement's and in the afternoon about 25 of them piled into the Heritage Centre for a short talk on Leigh.

We have received a very nice letter and a donation from Brenda Joscelyne who organised the trip, thanking us for the talk and the chance to look around the Heritage Centre, and posing a couple of questions.

1. Charlotte Joscelyne married Charles Baker King in 1834 at Leigh. Charles was a customs house agent. On 4 March 1842 Charles died, ostensibly of pleurisy, but was there something more sinister going on? Charlotte remarried in London in 1845 to Thomas Sams of Prittlewell, 18 years her junior. Did she poison her first husband as a family tale suggests?

2. In 1849, within a few days of each other, 3 children, Lavinia Joscelyne aged 3, Elizabeth Joscelyne aged 10 and Mary Ann Joscelyne aged 8 were buried at Leigh, all dead of cholera. Their father was Joseph Joscelyne a sweep living in Melford in Suffolk. No apparent connection can be found to the Leigh Joscelynes - so why were the children buried here?

Does anyone know the answers?

WE'LL MEET AGAIN IN LEIGH

On 12th June this year an amazing event took place in the Heritage Centre.

Two gentlemen minding their own business looking round the Centre were reunited after a gap of many years in their friendship.

Ian Martin (on the right) of the 3rd Chalkwell Bay Scouts now living in Thorpe Bay and Mike James of the 6th Leigh Sea Scouts now of Grantham, last met in Leigh 45 years ago.

On the 12th of June the sound of Ian's voice triggered a memory in Mike and the two were reunited. To those of us who were present it was an exceptional moment.



Planning Applications

The committee has considered several planning applications over the last few months. The most significant of these were:-

35 The Leas - 3 storey block of 7 flats - no objection

Midland Bank - new metal door. Members expressed a preference for a timber door in keeping with the Conservation Area

25 Broadway West - replacement shop fascia. Objection raised on the basis that the proposal was not appropriate to the Conservation Area.

STRAND WHARF

Some of you will already be aware that Strand Wharf has reverted to the control of the Borough Council. A Steering Group has been formed on which the Society is represented.

It is hoped the unsightly buildings will be demolished as soon as the appropriate consents are in place followed by an archaeological investigation.

Mike's Boatyard is set to become a restaurant and the Boatyard itself will move into the Tepco site.



DEAR DIARY

11/12 September

Leigh Regatta



14 September

Outing to the Thames
Barrier and Royal Mews



20 October

The Fisherman's Mission
An illustrated talk by Paul Jarret JP



17 November

Extraordinary Essex
An illustrated talk by Mavis Sipple



Leigh Regatta 11/12 September

For the two days of the Regatta this year the Heritage Centre will be fully manned.

We will be hoping to attract the many children who come to the Regatta by a seaside display upstairs with the opportunity for them to be 'creative with cockles'.

Our good friend of years past the Treasure Hunt will also be making an appearance.

So lets hope the weather is kind.



Digging up a memory

Take a look at this picture. It has kindly been donated to the Society by Mr Peter Marks of First Avenue, Westcliff.



As a young student Mr Marks was walking at the top of Leigh Cliffs when he saw these workers digging slit trenches.

Mr Marks tells us that the undulations which run north/south on the Green today could have been caused by this digging or perhaps by older ridge and furrow tillage which used to be visible on land in the area many years ago.

September 1938, when the picture was taken, was the time of the Munich Crisis. The Munich Agreement was signed on 29 September that year and Neville Chamberlain came back promising 'peace in our time'.

Does anyone know exactly what the digging was in aid of?

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

The Executors of the late Joyce MacConnell for the donation of her papers relating to Leigh collated over many years through her association with the Society.

Town Councillor Rita Cox who has donated two enlarged aerial photos taken pre WW2 of the Town.

A token dated 1796 engraved with St Clement's Church on one side and 'I Hemmin, Dealer in all kinds of hardware' on the other has been kindly donated by Harry Reader

Mrs Bernice Thomas (nee Phillips) formerly of Burnham Road has very kindly donated some remains of clay pipes dug up in the garden of the family's Burnham Road house during the 1950s. Mrs Thomas tells us that when she found them her parents were sceptical of their authenticity so she wrote to the Victoria and Albert Museum who confirmed they were the genuine article. It is hoped to display the fragments in the renovated 2 Plumbs Yard in due course.

Mr J Steel has donated a clay pipe found in the mud near Two Tree Island which has been dated by the Southend Museum as being between 1730-80. The foot of the pipe bears the makers initials 'WM' which might possibly be William Manby of London 1719-1763.



A TOKEN GESTURE

During the 17th century a shortage of coins led to shopkeepers and traders issuing their own tokens until a Royal Proclamation in 1672 forbade their circulation after the introduction of copper farthings and halfpennies. It is curious therefore that the Leigh Token is dated so much later.

Other examples issued at Leigh were:

George King - halfpenny issued in Leigh in 1668 depicting 3 tobacco rolls. George King was a mercer of Leigh who died in 1690.

Joseph Lamb - a quarter penny issued in Leigh in 1664 depicting a lamb couchant*. A Joseph Lamb occurs as a tenant of the Manor of Leigh but this is probably the issuer's father. The Lamb family settled in Leigh and Jonas Lamb a shipwright was an affluent man. Abraham Lamb was a ship's carpenter and his son Isaac was a distiller who died in Leigh in 1752.

(Sources: The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History and Essex Archaeological Society Papers)

* a lamb lying down with its head raised



BOOK STALL

The following is a list of Leigh Society publications. We also have a wide selection of other books and leaflets.

For those members who cannot get down to the Heritage Centre and who would like a copy of any of these please send a cheque or postal order made payable to the Leigh Society for the amount stated plus 26p per item postage and a large SAE to Publications, Leigh Heritage Centre, 13A High Street, Old Leigh SS9 2EN.

Guide to Leigh 1912-13 - 30p

Thames Sailing Barge Traffic From Leigh 1930s to 1950s - Graham Dent - 40p

Arthur Emery Recalls Life in Leigh 1900 to 1915 - £1

The Leigh Fishing Industry 1932 - 30p

Arthur Joscelyne's Dunkirk Memories - 50p

Annie Read's Childhood Memories - 50p

The Brent Goose - 20p

Yachting in the 1930s - 40p

1847 Tithe Map - 50p

A Walk Round Leigh Hill - 10p

A Walk Round Old Leigh 10p

Old Leigh - £1.20P

Shrimpers and Cocklers 1912-13 - 40p

Sea Scouts and the Old Town - 30p

The Metropolis of Shrimps - 20p



The Loo Rolls on



Everyone (not least the helpers) will be delighted to know that planning permission has at last been granted for the loo at the Heritage Centre.

So please form an orderly queue



IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

The one that didn't get away - Dr Murie's Whale

Not just a load of old pots - the story of Leigh Pottery

Edmund Worledge - An Artistic Ancestor

Characters of Old Leigh - Michael Tomlin

Articles for the next newsletter should be with

Carole, via the Heritage Centre, by 30 November



EDUCATION IS A WONDERFUL THING

Many of you will know that during the course of the year the Heritage Centre hosts an ever-growing number of school parties (in one case 90 children who were dealt with in 3 shifts) who have been given a talk and slide show about Leigh.

In June we also hosted a group from Witham with their twin town partners from Germany.

Paul Gilson gave a very interesting exposition on the effect of the EC on the fishing trade which was very well received and our thanks go to him and to John Porter and Frank Bentley for making the Leigh Sailing Club and the Den available for groups to 'picnic' in.

An enormous amount of effort, preparation and, not least, time, goes into these events and thanks must go to Margaret Buckey for her great work in organising them and to all the other helpers who take part in the visits.



YOU!

COME AND JOIN US



YOU!

The Leigh Society is growing from strength to strength but we are always keen to get new members so tell your friends about us.

The Society meets 5 times a year (1 the AGM) at the Elm Road Methodist Church, on a Wednesday evening, where we have a wide range of talks and slide shows.

During the year outings are organised to places of interest and there is our annual Christmas lunch.

The quiz this year was such a success we hope we will be able to stage similar events in the future.

The subscription is incredibly good value at £3pa or £5 for 2 years and covers both husband and wife or partners.

On top of all this there are 2 main newsletters a year.

So go on - get your friends to pick up a membership form or send in their name, address and telephone number and subscription to The Membership Secretary, Leigh Society, Leigh Heritage Centre, 13A High Street, Old Town, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 2EN.

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



We rather hope you'd like to keep your Leighway but if you don't please recycle it.