



# LEIGHWAY

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

## A YEAR TO REMEMBER

Well 2003 has been quite an eventful year for anniversaries even setting aside the Queen's Coronation and Prince William's 21<sup>st</sup>.

In Leigh in particular memories have been revived of the 1953 floods and a number of you have sent in your remembrances of that terrible tragedy.

It is also the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of John Wesley who visited Leigh on several occasions and left such a lasting impression on the Old Town. Contributions to Leighway from members continue to grow which is most gratifying – do keep it up all of you. This edition is a bumper one with 12 pages packed with information and interesting articles. Coming up we have the Regatta and the Comicals – so there is always plenty going on.



Ed

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Lets get the bad news out of the way first. If you have not renewed your 2003 subscription this is the last Leighway you will receive, which is a shame so if this jogs your memory send in your subscription now to the Heritage Centre.

Secondly, and with great reluctance, we are having to increase subscriptions from January to £6 for UK members and £12 for those of you living abroad. This does however, cover a household. Unfortunately the cost of printing etc has forced this on us but we do hope you will all agree that the membership is still worth the while and remember you are helping to protect the Town and keep the Heritage Centre going.

In an effort to make renewal simpler for both members and the Society we enclose in this Leighway a form which enables you to automatically renew your membership by Standing Order. If you feel you are able to use this method please complete the form and return it to the Membership Secretary c/o the Heritage Centre before the end of the year.

## HI THEE TO STRATFORD

Our intrepid events organiser, Ann Price, is still looking to take a party of members to Stratford-on-Avon in May next year. Whilst several of you have expressed an interest Ann is still keen to hear from others who may like to go. So get in touch with Ann at 15 Henry Drive or via the Heritage Centre and she will be happy to give you the details.

## GEOFF CHRISP

It is with deep regret that we record in Leighway the passing of another staunch supporter of the Society.

Geoff was instrumental in designing the Society's logo and the artwork for our walk leaflets, drawing on his love and affinity for the Old Town.

He was also a dogged defender of the preservation of our surroundings, taking it upon himself to paint out graffiti and with his wife Pat on their daily walks keeping an eye on the Estuary and its surroundings.

His illustrated articles for Leighway on the birdlife were interesting, knowledgeable and entertaining and I am grateful that he found the time to write them for us.

Our sincere condolences go to Pat and the family.

## CHRISTMAS COMICALS

I know its an awful thought but that time of year is fast approaching. You will find a flyer within the Leighway for this year's event on 13 December at the Den.

As in previous years we have a theme which this year is Radio Days. We hope all you avid wireless listeners will come along to hear some of those well remembered favourites.

For those of you who would like to take part can you please make yourselves known to a member of the Committee as soon as possible as we will be organising a meeting in late October to work out the programme.

I am sure you will realise after three years that virtuoso performances are not expected and the idea is just for everyone to have fun – so why not give it a go?

And of course it is all in aid of Plumbs Cottage.

## DIARY DATES

131/14 September	Leigh Regatta
15 October	Smuggling in Essex – Mr Thomas
12 November	The Old and the New - Slides of Leigh – John Porter
13 December	Comicals
TBA December	Christmas Lunch

## CHARACTERS OF OLD LEIGH

### FIDDLER ON THE BRIDGE

I know we had a Bridge family tale last issue but I think the following warrants an entry. It is an article from a local newspaper dated 1902, kindly supplied by Ruby Welbourn the Granddaughter of the Charles Bridge as I (Carole Pavitt) am the Great Granddaughter of the Bill 'Fiddler' Bridge of the story. Both are brothers of Henry (Scopie) of the last article. I think the sentiments though could apply to any of the Leigh fishing families and the description of their work is a great insight into their lives.

#### Out on the Deep

An experience both enjoyable and educational, and well worth the gaining, is that of spending a few hours on a genuine professional fishing smack - enjoyable (to those who may be called 'fair sailors' because even off Southend-on-Sea the sea is not always like the proverbial mill pond) from the novelty of the surroundings, and educational from the fact that it gives one some practical insight into the manner and means by which many of our near neighbours drag - literally drag - a livelihood from the depths of the sea. In this district a fishing boat is known as a 'bawley', and the Leigh fleet may frequently be seen moored some distance west of Southend Pier.

Many years ago Leigh was an old-fashioned, picturesque, genuine, and very dirty fishing village, but of late it has removed some (not all) of its dirt, the speculative building has done its best to ruin the picturesqueness, and its District Council seems determined that it shall no longer be old-fashioned.

The Leigh fleet spends most of its time hunting the active and wily shrimp, and is the chief source of supply to the London markets. Standing on Leigh station, or watching the men returning with the daily catches, one sometimes wonders where all the shrimps go to, but go they do - greatly for the advantage of the sturdy fishermen of Leigh.

One of the finest boats in the Leigh fleet is The Guide and it was on board this vessel that the trip herein described was made.

One fine September afternoon last season the chief and myself made our way to the Pier Head, and, at the appointed time, descried The Guide churning her way towards us, close to the Pier Head. She was brought up to the wind, her big dark sails loose and flapping, the footboat was cast off, and Brother Charles came to fetch us off.

Charles is the younger of the Bros Bridge, who own and work The Guide. He would have made a typical gallant, and very honest pirate in the good old days; and in response to his hearty hail we step into the boat.

We had considerable and varied luggage. Thick overcoats (for the nights are cold, and September is not to be trusted), a rug, and rubber shoes to wear on board. A plentiful supply of 'grub', including bread, cheese, beef, pastry, and fresh and tinned fruits. We knew that our hosts had a weakness for what are known as 'sweets'.

We took no more liquor than the Chief's personal flask contained, because our aforementioned hosts neither need nor appreciate it. On reaching the bawley we were greeted by Bill (better known as 'Fiddler') Bridge, the elder of the two brothers. He would have made a really beautiful Viking; in fact he looks like it now, and almost as ornamental. He shakes hands with a hand nearly as large as the hand of Providence, and with as much goodwill in it, and bids us a genuine welcome.



Bill 'Fiddler' Bridge

The boat having been made fast and our precious luggage safely stowed away, we get to work. I say 'we' because one cannot be an absolutely idle passenger on a bawley, and we do our best to bear a hand when we can.

Some distance east of the Pier the trawl is dropped and work begins in earnest.

The trawl is a long, somewhat finely meshed net (remember we are shrimping), attached to a very long cable, which runs to a windlass standing about midships. Net, beam, buoy, are dropped with a splash overboard. The cable runs swiftly out dragging over the sand beneath, far behind us.

From time to time Bro Charles drops overboard a small net shaped like a skeleton shovel. This is known as a 'tell-tale', and shows us whether we are really invading the country of the shrimps or catching (for our subsequent trouble and loss) a netfull of the assorted rubbish which a paternal government dumps from time to time upon the fishing grounds of the district, to save itself the trouble of taking it a few miles further down into deep water, where it would do no harm. At last Charles suggests that we should 'have a look at her' and mans the windlass himself.

The net comes slowly home and at last the trawl beam appears alongside. The helm is made fast and 'all hands' help to bring the net itself on board. This done, sails are reset, and with the good boat making fair way we proceed to the next business. The pocket or cod end of the net is turned out. Instantly, myriads of crabs make frantic efforts to 'go home' dropping out through the scuppers or being assisted over board by willing hands.

Habitual pier head anglers will readily believe that there seems to be more crabs than anything else in the net.

These having disappeared or been ruthlessly 'chucked' such fish as may be in the net are next sorted out. Many of these are of the everyday edible varieties but some are strange fearsome looking beasts, which also are promptly ejected - no doubt to their own satisfaction as much as ours. But the shining whiting, the lively dab, flounder, and the aristocratic and succulent sole, go down below into a box 'for future reference'.

Many things, great curiosities to landsmen's eyes, come up in the voracious net, and are promptly pointed out and described by the genial brothers. The beautiful squid, the sea snake (prescribed dried and powdered as a cure for whooping cough); the comical hermit crab, which Charles puts through its performance for our amusement; the hideous and destructive dogfish, which we were persuaded were young sharks, a very natural belief for the resemblance is extraordinary.

'Look out for weevers' says Charles; but we have heard of 'weevers' before. The weever is a beautifully marked and coloured fish, but has several pointed spines about his person, which, if they pierce one's flesh, immediately set up terrible inflammation, known in some cases to have resulted in loss of a limb or even death. So we carefully avoid the gentlemen. At last having cleared out everything else we come to the shrimps

themselves, which lie, in a semi-transparent wriggling heap, upon the deck. They are washed repeatedly in a sieve, allowing the small ones to escape, and the entire catch having been thoroughly cleansed is ready for its final doom.

In the hold amidships stands a large iron cauldron filled with sea water, and with a fire burning merrily beneath. The unhappy shrimps are scooped up and cast into the seething water, curling up and assuming the form and colour familiar to the British tea table. In two or three minutes they are done, and are then fished out of the cauldron in a hand net, and spread upon another net on deck to cool.

The net is cast again, the decks washed down with copious floods of the ever handy water and we adjourn for luncheon. We call it luncheon but as we have tea and shrimps with every meal it might as well be called anything else.

The beef tin is broached. Charles, who is first mate, steward, purser, doctor and cook, has evidently forgotten the tablecloth or it has not returned from the wash, and though there are plates on board, thick slices of bread will do as well, added to which you will have heard in your childhood that 'fingers were made before forks' – and there we are. Charles makes 'ripping' tea, and nobody finds fault about how much sugar you take. I doubt if you really know how good pineapple chunks, lured from their tin on the point of a knife, taste under such circumstances. Luncheon over we clear away and 'wash up' and to work again. Down by the Nore Sand we manage to pick up a huge piece of wreckage from one of the numerous large wrecks that, as Bill explains, lie all along the sand. The net comes up destitute of fish, shrimps or anything but the rugged piece of planking which has torn an immense hole in it.

We wait to hear the two Leigh men act up to local reputation in the way of language, but they fail, as we might have known, being two of nature's gentlemen, with no use for the limited vocabulary of profanity.

The rent is mended, and we fish till long after darkness sets in. The chief and I are sleeping on board, but cannot face the bunks in the cabin, so decide to camp out on deck for the night. The brothers kick off their huge sea boots and disappear down the hatchway; while we arrange spinnaker, jib and foresail, to make as comfortable a bed as may be. After some argument I suggested that the chief had better get the mainsail down, and have it all to himself; but at last we settled matters amicably and stretched ourselves out, chatting both dozed off and slept. We had anchored just below the Chapman. A glorious moon threw a broad silver path across the water that rippled musically past the bows of The Guide.

Now and again we could hear the thud, thud, and see the lights of steamers gliding up and down the river. Ashore gleamed the many lights of Leigh, Westcliff and Southend, while the long line of lights on Southend Pier looked like a fairy chain of silver. At break of day we were roused by the cheery voice of Charles, suggesting something in the way of breakfast – a welcome suggestion, indeed. That disposed of, we turned to again and worked till about your breakfast time, maybe.

At last we had to bid the brothers farewell, and landing at the Pier Head, in the freshness of a lovely autumn morning wend our way to toil and streets again convinced that what we regarded as toil was as nothing to that braved daily by our gallant friends on The Guide; and that we might go far through many streets to find other such genuine Englishmen, in every sense, as the Brothers Bridge.

## **PLUMBS' PROGRESS**

The Plumbs appeal has been much boosted recently by the quiz night and sale of certificates. A special thanks goes to the Sea Scouts who very generously donated £200 to the appeal recently. Margaret and Carole attended Church Parade to receive the cheque. We are most grateful for the continued support of the Sea Scouts who also make the Den available for the Comicals and in connection with school parties where they share the honours with the Sailing Club.

This is true community spirit and the Society is most grateful for their help.

The Plumbs fund now hovers on the £7000 mark so well done everyone.

## **A BROADWAY BIRTHDAY**

In July the Society, in the form of Margaret Buckey, Ann Price and Alan Crystall were delighted to be invited to help celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the HSBC (formerly Midland) Bank in the Broadway.

A small display was mounted of Leigh's history and attracted a lot of interest from attendees at the birthday 'party'.

As members know both the Heritage Centre and Plumbs Cottage are registered charities and the Bank has been most helpful in ensuring that we receive all the benefits that charitable status entitles us to. Once again the the organisations within the town helping each other.

Heres to the next 75

## **PLANNING ISSUES**

Over the last few months the Society has been consulted on a number of planning applications affecting the Leigh Conservation Areas.

Several of them have been in connection with shop fronts in the Broadway and we have striven to ensure that the character of the Broadway is retained.

Perhaps the largest and most controversial application has been the one for 24 flats on a site formerly occupied by one house in Hadleigh Road.

We looked at this application very carefully because of our concern about its consequences for Hadleigh Road and the surrounding area. We advised the Borough Council that we objected most strongly to the application on the basis of its gross overdevelopment of the site, the massing and size of the development which we considered to be totally out of character with the area generally and specifically in conservation area terms the lack of consideration for design issues. We were also concerned regarding the adverse impact on the amenity of nearby properties. Consequently we have urged the Council to refuse the application. We now understand the application has been withdrawn but we will look out for any further applications on the site.

As members know we are consulted on all planning applications within the conservation areas including those in relation to trees and advertisements (shop signs etc). Whilst we obviously we take into account where known the views of people in the conservation areas we have to judge each application on a planning basis only and respond with good planning based reasons for our views. Everyone is obviously more aware on the ground of how a particular development will affect them or their property and may object on more personal or emotional grounds. The Society is duty bound to keep within planning and conservation rules and guidelines, otherwise our credibility as a consultee would be compromised.

# REFLECTIONS OF A MIRROR

(Memories of a summer under sail)

By Dave Peddie

If you read my previous piece, “Splish Splash”, in the January 2003 issue of Leighway, you will remember that Leigh Swimming Pool began a lifelong love of the salty wet stuff that laps this island’s shores. Well, apart from swimming in it, you can also sail on it. Of course, if you sail on it, it really does help to be able to swim in it!

My first sailing experience began with the sailing club at Belfairs High for Boys. This was started and run by one of the physics teachers, Mr. Barge (sic) and the enthusiasm of one or two of the older boys who already could sail. So in 1963, Belfairs Sailing Club built and sailed their own GP 14. I believe it was called “Mrs Spratt”, although a dinghy named “The Lady Albermarle” is lurking in my memory as well.

Bitten by the bug, I didn’t want to merely crew other people’s boats, I wanted to be on the helm; to be in charge. But to do that you had to own your own boat. It was about this time that the financial reality clicked in. It is no coincidence that big yachts are owned by millionaires and smaller dinghies are not owned by paupers. A GP 14, which was the craft to aspire to, was out of my league. However, what should appear on the horizon but the Daily Mirror in its days before it became the down-market tabloid that it is today.

The paper sponsored a design competition to create a dinghy that could be built easily and was not too expensive. The winning entry was designed by Jack Holt and Barry Bucknell, yes *that* Barry Bucknell. It was a true DIY Dinghy, 10’ 10” long, with built-in bouyance and held together with copper wire stitches and fibreglass tape and resin. Its appearance at the London Boat Show of 1963 caused quite a sensation, but it was a boat you could build at home and the Mirror has since become one of the world’s most popular designs.

Here was what I needed; a boat for the people which wasn’t going to cost a fortune. Well, not a huge fortune anyway. I ordered one and it arrived in a huge flat-pack (Ikea eat your heart out). Rather more than a single screwdriver was required for this job. I spent the winter and spring of 63-4 putting it together in my bedroom, and the house stank of fibreglass resin for weeks. Before you ask, the bedroom was on the ground floor with french-windows to get it out into the garden.

It was a huge challenge but finally Mirror Dinghy M910 was finished. With a deep blue hull and the red sails it looked wonderful. I had joined a local sailing club with the hope of a place on a dinghy-rack with everyone else. Then I ran into the first bit of sailing snobbery. As I said earlier, a GP 14 was the boat to aspire to. This new interloper in the shape of a blunt-ended over-grown pram dinghy with a sail was looked down upon. I was offered a running mooring which I spent a couple of weeks digging it out in thigh-deep mud only for it to be assigned to someone else. So what do you do when you are 15 years old and turned over by the grown-ups? You quit and make your own way.

I enquired at one or two places before Mike’s Boat Yard in Old Leigh’s High Street offered a corner where I could store the dinghy and a slipway where I could launch, and that was all I needed. The yard was (and still is as far as I know) between the Old Foundry currently housing the Lynn Tait Gallery and the Old Custom House.

There was only one more hurdle. How to get the dinghy from back garden to boat-yard? Along came a friend of my Aunt who was most obliging in that he towed the boat for me. “Towed” is perhaps misleading. The car was a Mini Minor, and I had to kneel in the open boot – about the size of a large shoe-box – hanging on to the launch-trolley with one hand and the car with the other. I’ve no idea what we would have said if we had been stopped by the Police, but we weren’t. Against the odds we got it safely from Westcliff to the footbridge by Leigh Sailing Club and man-handled it down into the High Street.

So the real adventure began. All I needed now was a fair wind from the west to be able to sail out along Leigh creek, avoiding returning cockle boats and the mud banks.



I felt something of a pioneer that first day when I nervously launched M910, now called, “Avenger”, packed with one mother and a school-friend and armed with a few basic sailing lessons. Health and Safety? Pshwarr! We were sailing and that was all that mattered. OK, I confess to having a bright yellow buoyancy jacket, but no-one else did!

That summer I was the only person sailing a Mirror around that area. The boat-racks of that same sailing club were full of GP 14’s and as I sailed by I mentally stuck 2-fingers up. Ironically, in ’66, just 2 years later, the first Mirror European Championships were held in France, on the Mediterranean, and those self-same club racks were filling up with Mirrors. Nice to know I was one of the first!

I had two regular crew-members who had equal disregard for life and limb and were brave enough to risk the briny with me. Chris R. and Monty A. either all together or in

various combinations got wet-cold-tanned, bruised knees and smacked on the head with the boom throughout that summer.

When this trusted crew could not be press-ganged into service; homework for some reason being a priority, I ventured out solo. I have to admit that this was not without some trepidation. Being brave and fool-hardy with others is one thing, being by yourself is entirely different. None-the-less, smacking the Mirror's blunt end into the estuary waves and throwing up great buckets of soaking spray iridescent with the light of the sun was still magic, and being out there, with a lone hand on the tiller was enthralling. Zipping up and down the coast from Bell Wharf to Chalkwell may not have been far in terms of distance, but it was another world for me.

Now every sailor has at least one story of the horrifying storm that bore down on them and nearly sent them to Davy Jones' Locker, and so have I. I was making my way from Bell Wharf out through the array of moored boats between the wharf and the Thames Estuary Y.C. boat when I was hit by a vicious squally storm which had snuck up behind me. It hit me like a stampeding Bull and "Avenger" shot off as from a cannon. I let go the jib and concentrated all my efforts on not ramming moored boats. I was successful with one exception. A fine black hulled, single-masted boat just seemed to draw me to it. There was a mighty sound of wood-splintering as I rammed the boat and bits of "Avenger" parted company with the rest of the craft. Not only that but my main sheet was now wrapped around bits of the black boat and the wind and waves were playing merry hell with me. The unknown black boat suffered not a scratch.

It was then I noticed a hole in the bottom of the boat. The dinghy was so designed as to have only a single sheet of ply between your knees when you went about, and the sea. During the squall a small trough must have opened up under the exact spot where my knee had been and the wood had cracked open a flap of plywood allowing the sea to bubble in.

I still don't really know how I managed to untangle the sheet, drop the mainsail and remain in the boat and bail the water, but I did, and as the squall eased, I rather ignominiously rowed back to the boat yard, which seemed to take forever against the wind and waves.

I have to admit that this whole experience rather shook me. I was in one piece and decided I would like to remain that way. Damage to the boat turned out to be minimal and was repaired, and although I sailed the rest of that '64 summer, I had the feeling it would be the last. The final decider was the grim realisation that maintenance on a plywood boat was going to be expensive, too expensive, and so, sadly, at the end of that summer I sold "Avenger". The bright side was that I sold it for not much less than it had cost to build. With Mirrors now numbering over 70,000 I wonder if M910 still survives somewhere, or has long since returned to the dust from which it was formed?

The story is not quite finished. Chris R., inspired by regular soakings in '64, bought a Pegasus glass-fibred hull dinghy in '65 and I crewed for him. He knew even

less than I did about sailing and crewing was quite an experience.

After that year, interest in modes of transport moved towards motorbikes and cars, and it was 20 years before I put my hand on the tiller of a dinghy again whilst living on the Isle of Wight. The salt was still in the blood it would seem.

Now that the Mirror's red sails adorn many a sunset the world over, it's good to remember that first year of a historic dinghy and of a teenager's first experience of sailing out of Old Leigh.

## BELL WHARF BYELAWS

In 1904 the Leigh Urban District Council issued byelaws regulating the use of Bell Wharf.

Byelaws of the Free Fisherman had originally been made in 1697 and Bell Wharf had been called King's Strand but changed its name in 1854. The Wharf was conveyed to the Leigh UDC in 1897 for the princely sum of £185 subject to such rights as existed for fisherman to land fish and bring them to shore free of toll.

In 1913 Leigh UDC was swallowed up by Southend Corporation who undertook to protect the ancient rights and privileges of the Leigh fishermen.

Some of the more interesting byelaws were:

- No person shall use the Wharf while intoxicated and no person shall while using the Wharf be guilty of any violent, quarrelsome or disorderly behaviour.
- No person shall (without agreement of the Council) use the Wharf for the purpose of selling or exposing for sale any material, commodity, goods or other article.
- No person shall use the Wharf or any part thereof for the purpose of fishing or bathing therefrom without the consent of the Council
- No person shall, unless duly authorised by the Council, take or place or use upon the Wharf, or in any part thereof, any steam roundabout, shooting gallery, cocoanut shy, or other similar contrivance
- The person in charge of any horse or beast of burden shall not leave the same unattended on the Wharf, or allow the same to remain thereon longer than necessary for the loading or unloading of any material.

There were of course many byelaws regarding the working of the Wharf by vessels carrying various commodities and for the regulation of machinery on the Wharf.

Anyone offending the byelaws was liable to a penalty of £5 and in the case of a continuing offence a further penalty of 5 shillings for each day they continued to offend.



Bell Wharf at about the time when the byelaws were made

**HADLEIGH SKIPPER AND  
ILL-FATED KETCH  
DROWNED OFF BROADSTAIRS  
LEIGH AND CANVEY MEN MISSING**

**The following from the Southend Standard,  
October 28, 1920**

Compiled and edited by Professor Bernard de Neumann  
The City University, London, EC1V 0HB

At an inquest held at Broadstairs on Friday, 22 October 1920, on the body of the seaman washed up at Broadstairs two days previously (20 October), the deceased was identified as Captain Frederick Bernard de Neumann, of Eva Cottage, Leigh Road, Hadleigh, grandson of the late Baron de Neumann, and of French extraction. Captain de Neumann was born at Tottenham 42 years ago. He married Miss Muriel Potter, a member of a family associated with Hadleigh for over sixty years, and leaves her with four young children. From the age of thirteen until the outbreak of war he served in deep water, but afterwards joined a transport carrying cargoes across the channel. He became mate and subsequently captain of the *Algoland* and later was in command of the *Lochaber*, crossing from Cardiff to Waterford. Some 18 months ago he was master of the ketch *Deerhound*, which, when on a voyage from London to Weymouth, was disabled in a gale off Ramsgate. While repairs were in progress, Captain de Neumann was given command of the barge *Alpe* bound from London to Jersey, and once more when off the Thanet coast was caught in a heavy gale and his craft was damaged. In the meantime a Captain Weatherby had been given command of the *Deerhound*, and in rough weather in the channel he was washed overboard. Captain de Neumann afterwards bought the *Deerhound* and used her as a cargo vessel once more. At the inquest it was stated that the last time the captain was seen alive was a fortnight before at Hole Haven when he was about to depart for a voyage to Jersey. The day after he sailed a heavy gale sprang up, and wreckage identified as part of the bulwarks of the *Deerhound* had been washed ashore at Broadstairs. A verdict of "found drowned" was returned. Mrs de Neumann has been suffering for several years from nervous paralysis, partly due to shock caused by air raids, and had lost the use of her hands and her right foot. When the sad news was communicated to her, she recovered the use of her foot and in some measure that of her hands, and was able to walk. With her sister, Mrs Lindsey, and a neighbour, Mrs Trew, she attended the inquest, and on Saturday the funeral at St Peter's, Broadstairs. A fourth mourner was Mr Proxter, of Ramsgate, a friend of the late captain.



The wedding of Captain de Neumann

With the remains were interred a photograph of his wife which he had carried for a number of years, on the grave was laid a wreath of carnations, lilies, and chrysanthemums from Mrs de Neumann, her three boys, and little girl. The mate of the *Deerhound* was George Plumb of Leigh, better known in the High Street as "Ricer" Plumb. It is, of course, concluded that Plumb lost his life. He belonged to an old Leigh family, was 56 years of age and single. The third hand on the ship, who is also missing, is a Mr Jagger, of Canvey Island.

*The following information is from the General Register and Record Office of Shipping and Seamen:*

Name of Ship: Deerhound  
 Official Number: 52986  
 Port of Registry: Weymouth  
 Date of Death: Not Recorded  
 Place of Death: Not Recorded  
 Name and Surname of Deceased: F.B. de Neumann  
 Age: 42  
 Rating or Rank: Master  
 Nationality: British  
 Last Place of Abode: Not Recorded  
 Cause of Death: Supposed Drowned  
 Remarks: Ship missing since 9th October, 1920

Also aboard as Mate was G. Plumb.

*Note by author:*

The *Deerhound* was built by William Thomas Cheek at East Donyland (Rowhedge) in 1865 and was registered to the Southampton Pilots in 1874 and later in 1910 to the Weymouth Pilots before being sold to Frederick B Newman of Eva Cottage, Leigh-on-Sea in 1920. After the accident, somewhat spookily, her tender was eventually washed up at Weymouth.

During and immediately after the First World War due to anti-German sentiment the family was forced to change its name de Neumann to Newman for a period.

## LEIGHWAY

Articles for the next edition (January) should be with Carole by 30 September.

e-mail: carole.pavitt@btopenworld.com

post: 27 North Dell, Chelmsford, CM1 6UP or through the Heritage Centre. We very much want members to play an active part in all our activities, especially the Leighway, so pick up your pens and get writing.

Leighway is published by the Leigh Society c/o Leigh Heritage Centre, 13A High Street, Old Town, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 2EN  
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The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the committee or officers of the Society. We rather hope you will keep your Leighway but if not please recycle it © The Leigh Society

## SOLD UP THE RIVER

Richard I sold the bed of the River Thames from the City to the Estuary for 1500 marks and the Corporation of London still has rights to remove weirs. A statute of 1393 specifically names the Mayor as the conservator of the River Thames and the authority was eventually confined to the area between Staines and the Yantlett Creek. This jurisdiction was marked by four stones bearing the City's arms and the City used to carry out a nautical beating of the bounds every seven years.

In 1771 the Lord Mayor and his entourage came to visit the Leigh stone and disembarked from the Lord Mayor's barge into two boats. But the tide dropped and the Lord Mayor's boat ran aground a mile from shore. He was put in a flat bottomed punt and 12 men drew it through the shallow water and over the mud to the beach!

The Corporation's water bailiff had legal powers to confiscate fishing nets (in 1313 nets were burnt in Cheapside because the mesh was too small!) and he controlled the times when fish could be caught (i.e. the close season) Nothing has changed. But records show that there was a time when the River Thames boasted of smelt, roach, flounders, dace, whiting, lampreys, salmon, oysters, cockles, mussels and whelks.

Porpoise and sturgeon caught had to be delivered to the Lord Mayor but the reward was fifteen shillings for a porpoise and a guinea for a sturgeon.

by Binnie Mobsby

## ST CLEMENTS COURT ...and a room for the maid!

St Clements Court was built in 1937, taking its name from the church of St Clement the patron saint of fishermen who was martyred by being thrown into the sea with an anchor round his neck.

When St Clements Court was built the intention was for two blocks side by side joined by an underground road. The road is still there but the war intervened and after the war St Clements Court East was built.

St Clements Court design is unique, it has a north and south wing, each wing has an atrium design. The wings are joined by lifts, stairs and rubbish chutes on all floors. The rubbish goes down to the basement into bins where it is collected. The block was originally built for renting and had 8 different styles of flats from the Studio flat to the 6th floor flat with 3 bedrooms and a bedroom for the maid. The rents started at £65 p.a. to £250 p.a. for the largest flat. The rental was for a 3 year agreement and included rates and taxes and constant hot water.

The promotion in the original brochure was of a healthy environment, due to the tides in the Thames estuary setting up a movement on the sea and river bed which released iodine into the atmosphere in large quantities. Also promoted was Southend on Sea, 10 minutes away by bus, and Fenchurch Street station 50 minutes by train. Fares were 1/4d return for the day 3rd Class.

The block has 2 entrance vestibules from the Garden Court, which is now a car park. There is a garden back and front and on the south side with magnificent views of the Thames estuary. The two entrances lead into beautiful lobbies of art deco design. There was also a resident porter on the ground floor. The tenants' parking spaces are in the basement with access down a ramp from Broadway West and a lift from the basement to their flat. Eventually most of the flats were sold, but now more are being rented again. The flats have always been popular and sought after situation having every convenience of library, shops and station.

by Margaret Bender

## HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR



Thomas Dowsett was the first Mayor of Southend in 1892. Although born in Prittlewell he does have a Leigh connection.

In 1881 he was a widower living at 39 High Street, Prittlewell, his occupation being house and estate agent. There were 4 children living there with him ranging in age from Jane at 20 to Herbert aged only 3. His first wife Eliza Ann had died in 1878 possibly in child birth. Thomas was obviously a well to do person with several servants.

The 1881 census took place in April and by June Thomas had married Clarissa Bentall born in Leigh, the daughter of Arthur Bentall of Brickhouse Farm, Leigh. Clarissa thus came from another well to do family, her father farming 1090 acres and employing 31 men and 3 boys.

Arthur, who was born in Rayne near Braintree, had purchased Brickhouse Farm in 1865.

Philip Benton records in the History of the Rochford Hundred that a field was added to Brickhouse Farm called Bellropes which Arthur Bentall purchased in 1866 for £30 from the parishioners of Leigh and the money was given to the churchwardens of Leigh for the repair of the church bells or any part of the fabric of the church.

Benton also records that Brickhouse Farm was in 3 parishes – Leigh, Prittlewell and Eastwood and that the boundary between Leigh and Prittlewell actually passed through the house itself and the boundary mark was cut into the kitchen mantelpiece.



Brickhouse Farm at the corner of Blenheim Chase and Mounddale Gardens

## LEIGH AND THE LADY

On Monday, 3 June 1611, about three in the afternoon, three men rode from East Barnet, towards the Great North Road but it was a deceit for the male dress of one of them hid the Lady Arbella Stuart, first cousin of King James I. In the wake of the problems of the English succession in respect of her aunt Mary Queen of Scots Arbella was a leading contender for James' throne and all her life had unwittingly been at the centre of plot. Her Grandmother was the redoubtable Bess of Hardwick.

Now Arbella had flouted the King's supremacy and married in secret without the required King's permission.



Arbella was 35 and her bridegroom was 23, but even more outrageous than the difference in age (more outrageous to us now than then when marriages of convenience were not uncommon) William Seymour was also in line for the throne. King James must have felt very vulnerable and in a frenzy ordered the couple to be kept apart. William was shut up in the Tower. Arbella was put under a kind of house arrest in London and a double escape was planned, but on hearing that she was to be taken to Durham she wrote claiming the right of *habeas corpus* (the right to be brought before a judge to ascertain whether she was being lawfully held) but nothing came of it. When the time came to set out for Durham, she refused to leave her bed, and the king's men had to carry her into the street, mattress and all.

But at Barnet they had to stop because Arbella was ill. The King, not unsurprisingly, thought she was faking, but her doctor declared that she could not travel a long distance. Thought to be so debilitated that the guard slipped, on a June morning she put on 'a man's doublet, a man-like peruke with long locks over her hair, black cloak, russet boots and a rapier' - and, with her gentleman servant William Markham, escaped, arriving at Blackwall that evening, hoping William had also broken free from his captors.

But at Blackwall there was no William, and at 7.30 Arbella's travelling companions urged that as the tide would soon turn, they must sail. They were to be rowed down river to where a French captain called Corve would wait until nightfall.

Arbella insisted on giving William more time to get there but had no means of knowing what had happened to him. In the end she left two servants behind to direct William her company embarked in two boats, one carrying Arbella and the other

William's smuggled out of his lodgings. Passing Woolwich, the traversed the Thames estuary.

At dawn they approached Leigh. The morning light could give them away as the tiny port and its shipyards were waking. Corve's ship should be further on but there was no way of knowing if he was still waiting for them.

They hailed the master of a nearby brig, one John Bright, but he refused to take them to Calais. Bright was later to describe them in vivid detail to the authorities.

Eight miles beyond Leigh, they reached Corve's barque.

Meantime William had escaped from the Tower and was not far away. But the alarm had been raised and the King had issued a proclamation issued against the fleeing lovers. Everyone connected with the pair was brought in for questioning: The fugitives' route was easily traced - thanks, in part, to the observant John Bright

Every vessel and every house in Leigh was searched. Admiral Monson, quickly sent every available vessel after the pair, including an oyster boat, loaded with six men and shot, to set out while the bigger ships were still getting under way, and himself put to sea in a light fishing craft to watch the action from as close as may be.

Corve's ship got to within sight of Calais; but here Arbella held them back from landing while she still awaited William, and this was to prove fatal.

An English pinnace *Adventure*, sent from the Downs, chased Arbella's vessel, but the winds would not let him overtake her; so the resourceful Captain Cockett packed his men, armed 'with shot and pikes', into a smaller boat and set out. There was no point in resistance and the party from the *Adventure* commandeered the larger French barque and took the whole party, prisoners and captors, back to Sheppey.

Admiral Monson sent for 'his Majesty's directions how to dispose of my lady, for that I am unwilling she should go ashore until I have further authority'. But in the meantime, he said gallantly, 'she shall not want anything the shore can afford, or any other honourable usage.'

Sadly, never again would Arbella be looked after so well.

Arbella was imprisoned in the Tower, where she remained until her death in 1615.

*This information is taken from a superb new book entitled 'Arbella - England's Lost Queen' by Sarah Gristwood. The account of Arbella's flight is recorded in great detail in documents held the British Library - guess where I'm going next.*

## JUST CALL HIM INTREPID

Many of you will have read in the local and national press about the incredible journey undertaken by member Douglas Garner who took it upon himself to drive all the way to Turkey for a dinner date with his great friend Dorothea.

Douglas travelled nearly 6000 miles across Europe to meet up with Dorothea in Fethiye. A remarkable achievement and what a wonderful surprise.

Well done Douglas.



## A TRAGIC EVENT COMMEMORATED

The East Coast Floods Remembered

**50 years has come and gone but some memories never fade. Here are the remembrances of some of our members of that terrible time.**

Stuart and James Brewer

My brother James and I were members of St Michael's Church Youth Club at the time of the flood. I had been to the Kursaal Ballroom on the Saturday evening as usual. It had a large spring dance floor and was always a great Saturday night. 3/6 (17 ½ p) entrance and 1/- (5p) on the late night bus to Leigh at 11.45p.m. Next morning several of us went to Church and heard the news of the flood. We went along Marine Parade and stood looking down on Leigh station. The sea water was up to the level of the platforms. Somehow we heard that volunteers were needed at Hadleigh schools. Four of us from the youth club went to help. My brother James drove our shop van to the school. We did not own a car in those days. He was asked to drive down to Benfleet station and there pick up the people from the Island and bring them up to the centre at the School. At the station were the survivors from Canvey clutching their few belongings and looking devastated from their ordeal. He made about 4 trips back and forth bringing people up for some food and shelter. Meanwhile we were finding blankets and mattresses for those people arriving at the centre. Making tea etc. We did this on the following Monday evening also. During our time there I remember the Queen Mother paying us a visit.

Peter Cotgrove

Sitting *in* church (Leigh Wesley) on an ordinary Sunday morning, when reference was made to disastrous floods the previous night, which had affected Canvey, amongst other places, it was clear to the 15 year old senior scout that he needed to do something about it. After church, home for a quick lunch, change into scout uniform and off with a colleague and an assistant scout master, by a little Austin 7 (if memory serves correctly), to Canvey Island.

In the event, we didn't achieve anything of significance that day. All the important rescue work that could be done had been carried out much earlier in the day. There was a great deal of water still apparent, but little for us to do.

Later, working parties were required. Then we could have an impact. It was hard and not very exciting but people's gardens and houses needed some muscle power to put them into some semblance of order. Here, a garden shed, perhaps a seven feet cube, tumbled across the garden by the water flow and deposited upside down twenty feet from its original site. Inside this bungalow the 'high tide mark' was at the same level as my eyes. How could so many people have survived?

We worked at weekends for a while and then we were no longer needed. The Flood receded into history for us - but not for those more closely and intimately affected.

Frank Bentley, Former Group Scoutmaster

During the early hours after the flood tide, the police telephoned me with the news, and a request to use our boats for evacuation of folk from Canvey Island. I then aroused some of our stalwarts from their slumbers and went down to the Old Town to our then HQ. Old Leigh Railway Station (downside). Our boats were made available, and on the next tide were towed over to the Island where we landed at the end of Oyster Creek.

People were then transferred via our boats to larger Leigh fishing Bawleys lying in the Creek. The latter then went back to Leigh where the evacuees were found accommodation etc.

The weather was extremely bitter and some islanders died from exposure.

At that time the sea had covered all the low land from Leigh to Benfleet, including the railway. On the Island the sea had surged over the old earth walls washing away the soil from the inside thus collapsing those ancient walls, originally built by the Dutch. Many of the timber bungalows were moved or swept away.

After the flood, the breaches in the walls were blocked up with sandbags. For the next three weeks the Sea Scouts of the 3rd Chalkwell Bay Troop worked on Bell Wharf filling sandbags when the tide was out, and ferrying them to the Island when the tide was on. We were assigned to the fishing boat 'Pride of Essex' skippered by the late Roy Edmunds, and his Mate Peter West who was an officer in the Sea Scout Group.

The sandbags were shipped to '800 Gut' a creek on the Hadleigh Ray side of the Island, and delivered to Army and R A F servicemen who repaired the breaches... again the weather was very cold and frosty. One of our ex-Naval whalers was badly damaged and was finally towed back to Leigh for repair at Johnson & Jago's boatyard. The bill was paid by the 38th Putney Sea Scout Troop who for some time after used to visit us and stay on our Railway Station HQ, the 'only 'live' station in the UK to be occupied by a Scout Troop. We only paid £5 per annum for it, and had more 'staff' than Fencurch Street Station... but that's another story I. To end this yarn it is fitting that it can now be told, because at the time, the antics of this young web-footed fraternity were not publicised.



Manning the breach – MV Pride of Essex

Fred Osborne

On day one we were asked to take fishing boats to Leigh Beck Canvey up a creek we called Oyster Creek as people were trapped in houses there. We went in dinghies. In one house a lady who had died from a stroke was floating on a table and her husband and children were perched on sideboards above the flood level. Some of these people were put on the fishing boats. Back in our dinghy we approached another flooded house with a big pram floating in the garden. I remember hoping it was an empty one as we got to it. It was I am glad to say.

The people were landed on Bell Wharf and transported away.

On day two fishermen were employed through Council staff to fill sandbags on Bell Wharf and at high tide take them to Oyster Creek to fill gaps in the wall. By now army people were on Canvey Island and had built a light floating bridge across the Creek. They opened a small gap to let fishing boats through. On one side of the gap was an army officer waiting to cross. One boat steered by Sid Ford gave his boat a 'nudge' to one side so it hit the bridge gently. The officer lost his balance and fell in, causing laughter all round from both us and his men.

On another occasion another officer was guiding Sid Ford with hand signals directing where he wanted the boat (completely unnecessary). He was in ankle deep water, Sid steered straight for him causing the officer to move backwards quickly and of course finish up sitting in the very cold water. Again laughter all round. But his men stopped when he looked at them.

We were paid for day two onwards and it was very welcome.

I have visited Canvey several times and I am surprised to see expensive houses built on such low ground at Leigh Beck.

### Thanks to all the above for sharing their memories

## FIRE FIRE

Fire as we know is no stranger to the Old Town. Our own disaster of 2 years ago dealt a blow to the Heritage Centre but thankfully recovery has been complete and the Centre is thriving again.

The Peterboat fire of 1892 is well known and if we care to look in the parish registers for St Clements we can find that domestically fire was a great danger to the inhabitants of the Old Town with several entries for death, particularly of children, through fire.

Today we are all used to the great red fire engines rushing to emergencies and to the wealth of fire precautionary measures which we are all urged to take. But how did we get to where we are today – by a long convoluted route made up of knee jerk reactions to fires through the centuries.

In the Middle Ages houses were made of timber, easily ignitable, as were the thatched roofs. Chimneys as we know them did not exist and with houses having a central hearth and straw strewn as floor covering it is not surprising that fires spread fast and furious.

William the Conqueror required all fires to be extinguished at night which was usually done by putting a metal cover over the fire to cut off the air supply – this was called a Couvert Feu which is where our word curfew comes from.

It took a 100 years from William to 1189 for the first attempt at fire legislation. The Lord Mayor of London required that all houses in the City should be built of stone. Thatched roofs were not permitted and party walls had to be a minimum thickness and height.

The Great Fire of 1666 was not the first time London had been razed, and indeed not the most severe. In 1212 3000 people died in a huge fire which led to all the alehouses being regulated on their construction. Requirements which later extended to bakeries and brewhouses. During the summer a tub of water had to be made available in case of fire.

During the 14<sup>th</sup> century hearths began to be positioned on the outside walls and towards the end of that century chimneys started appearing.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century timber chimneys (yes I said timber) were banned and the first Act of Parliament providing for fire prevention, fire fighting and arson was passed in Scotland.

Of course the fire that everyone remembers occurred in 1666 when a baker's shop in Pudding Lane started a fire which lasted for 4 days and destroyed five sixths of London. Amazingly only 6 people were killed but it was such a disaster that something had to be done and within a fortnight Charles II issued a proclamation stating that the walls of all new buildings were to be of brick or stone, the main streets were to be widened and the number of existing narrow alleyways were to be reduced.

In 1774 the Fires Prevention (Metropolis) Act was passed which listed 7 classes of thickness of external walls and party walls laid down for each class. It also provided for the maximum area of warehouses and every parish had to have 3 or more proper ladders of one, two and three storeys high to help people escape from burning property.

Fires continued to occur of course and each time further action was taken to try and prevent them in future

The most records of these are inevitably in the big cities like London and Edinburgh, but of course the provinces also had their fair share of disasters. Theatres were particularly vulnerable and various Acts were passed to ensure better fire prevention in these establishments. It was a fire at the Theatre Royal in Exeter in 1887 which killed 186 people which eventually led to a Public Health Act of 1890 which required every building used for public resort to be constructed and supplied with ample safe and convenient means of ingress and egress for the public. Later we had the Factory and Workshop legislation and there has been a raft of legislation over the years.

The National Fire Service was formed in 1941.

It was a fire closer to home in 1969 at the Rose and Crown at Saffron Walden in Essex which led to the Fire Precautions Act 1971. Eleven people had died in the fire.

There are many different regulations nowadays covering all types of venues and events and the workplace for the safety of the public and the Building Regulations cover a range of issues in housing etc in connection with fire prevention and safety.

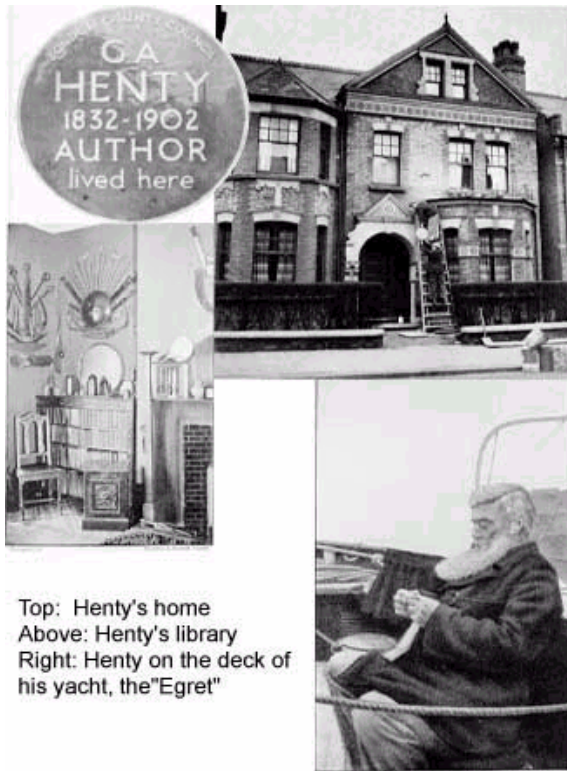
For us at the Heritage Centre the wind just blew in the wrong direction but my were we lucky that all that history had led to a fire brigade which was able to respond quickly and efficiently.



The Heritage Centre fire of 2001

## EVERY CHILD SHOULD HAVE A HENTY

The Society recently received a letter from the Hon Archivist of the Henty Society. The who?? Well G A Henty may not be a household name nowadays but over a century ago his books were numerous and very popular. Some members may even find them on their bookshelves or in the attic. He was the true Boy's Own writer of tales and adventures and he has a strong connection to Leigh.



Top: Henty's home  
Above: Henty's library  
Right: Henty on the deck of his yacht, the "Egret"

G. A. Henty's life (1832-1902) was filled with exciting adventure. Completing Westminster School, he attended Cambridge University. Along with a rigorous course of study, Henty participated in boxing, wrestling, and rowing. The strenuous study and healthy, competitive participation in sports prepared Henty to be with the British army in Crimea, as a war correspondent witnessing Garibaldi's fight in Italy, being present in Paris during the Franco-Prussian war, in Spain with the Carlists, at the opening of the Suez Canal, touring India with the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) and a trip to the California gold fields. These are only a few of his exciting adventures.

Henty was dubbed as "The Prince of Story-Tellers" and "The Boy's Own Historian." One of his secretaries reported that he would quickly pace back and forth in his study dictating stories as fast as the secretary could record them.

Henty died on board his yacht, Egret, in Weymouth Harbour shortly after the publication of his last book

The Hon Archivist writes as follows:

'George Alfred Henty (1832- 1902) was special correspondent to the London Standard newspaper and the writer of about 100

books, many essays and articles. Most of these were for youngsters but some were for older age-group readers. His books for children had historical and geographical fact as background and he called on his wide travelling to colour the gripping tales of daring-do. Henty's hobby and indeed his all-abiding passion was sailing and he kept a series of yachts at Leigh - on Sea. His crew members were locals, with the exception of a Cornish cook. Henty was a member of the Royal Thames, Royal Corinthian, and Medway Yacht Clubs. He owned the following yachts:

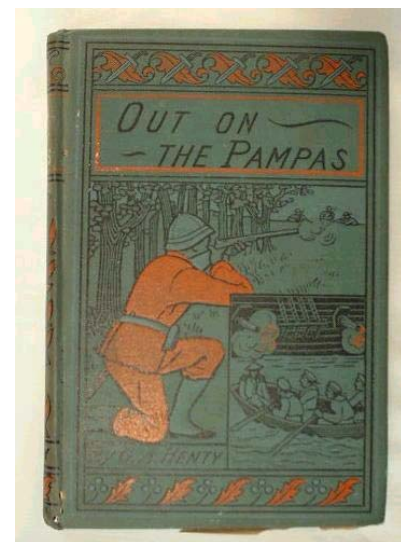
<i>The Pet</i>	10 ton
<i>He kept a skiff on the Thames and a half-deck canoe</i>	
<i>Waterwich (sloop)</i>	4 ton
<i>Kittiwake (ketch)</i>	16ton
<i>Meerschaum (yaw)</i>	32 ton
<i>Egret(schooner)</i>	83 ton

A photograph of his crew in 1897 survives. It shows them with Mr and Mrs Henty, after taking part in Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee review at Spithead. The crew names are not all known and it is doubtful if anyone will be able to fill in the gaps now. The cabin boy in the photograph is G Thompson and another member of the crew was Roughy Johnson (possibly the man in the middle back row.)



The crew of the Egret with Mr and Mrs Henty

As the Johnson family is still well represented in the town and in the Society membership can anyone shed any light on the crew members or does anyone have any other information which may be of help to the Henty Society who are planning to write a book on his life. If you do know something please write to the Hon Archivist, Henty Society, Old Foxes, Kelshall, Royston, Herts SG8 9SE.



## 300 NOT OUT JOHN WESLEY AND LEIGH



Many of you will know that this year has been the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of John Wesley's birth and many of you will have visited the exhibition held at New Road earlier in the year.

John Wesley had a profound effect on Leigh and its inhabitants, an effect which still survives in the local community.

About 150 years after his birth and only 60 or so years after his death and well within family memory Philip Benton in his History of the Rochford Hundred recorded Wesley's visits to Leigh as follows: -

"The Wesleyan Society holds a good position in this town, having been established by the Rev. John Wesley himself, who visited the flock upon several occasions. In plain and simple language this good man records in his journal his various itinerant visits to this place. The first appears to have been on November 12th, 1748, when he states, "I set out for Leigh, in Essex. It had rained hard in the former part of the night, which was succeeded by a sharp frost, so that most of the road was like glass; and the north-east wind sat just in our face. However, we reached Leigh by four in the afternoon. Here was once a deep open harbour; but the sands have long since blocked it up, and reduced a once flourishing town to a small ruinous village. I preached to most of the inhabitants of the place in the evening, to many in the morning, and then rode back to London."

His next visit was on Monday, December 18th, 1749, when he says, "I rode to Leigh, in Essex, and spoke in as awakening a manner as I could. On Wed., Dec. 20th, I left the little flock in peace and love, and cheerfully returned to London. On Mon., Dec. 10th, 1750, I rode to Leigh, in Essex, when I found a little company seeking God, and endeavoured to encourage them in provoking one another to love and good works. Nov. 12th, 1753,-I set out in a chaise for Leigh, having delayed my journey as long as I could. I preached at 7, but was extremely cold all the time, the wind coming strong from a door behind, and another on one side; so that my feet felt just as if I had stood in cold water. Tues., 13th, the chamber wherein I sat, though with a large fire, was much colder than the garden, so that I could not keep myself tolerably warm, even when I was close to the chimney." We must here explain that Wesley had been very unwell before coming to Leigh, and on his return to London on the 14th, suffered extremely from his feet getting chilled, and riding in an open chaise, with a piercing cold wind in his face. There is a tradition he was a guest at the house of Dr. Cook, and the above account as regards the fire-place, tallies with several

apertures in that edifice, and the garden alluded to is no longer in existence. His next visit was on Oct. 27th, 1755, and is deeply interesting, showing the state of the roads, and the dauntless spirit of the man. "We set out for Leigh, in Essex, but being hindered a little in the morning, the night came on without either moon or stars, when we were about two miles short of Rayleigh. The ruts were so deep and uneven, that the horses could scarce stand, and the chaise was continually in danger of overturning; so that my companions thought it best to walk to town, though the road was both wet and dirty. Leaving them at Rayleigh, I took horse again. It was so thoroughly dark, that we could not see our horses' heads; however, by the help of Him to whom the night shineth as the day, we hit every turning, and without going a quarter of a mile out of our way, before nine we came to Leigh. Wed., 29, I returned to London."

It is to be regretted that Wesley in his journal respecting this place does not mention a single individual by name, although in other instances his references in this respect are numerous, but it is gratifying to find him speaking of the Leigh people so kindly and hopefully. We may suppose the seed sown many years before by the old pious ministers of Leigh was still bearing fruit, as he nowhere denounces them in that caustic style which he sometimes applies to the inhabitants of other places, and from which high estate this people afterwards fell. Whilst here Wesley read over for the first time "Lord Anson's Voyage," and remarks "What pity he had not a better historian; one who had eyes to see, and courage to own the hand of God." Upon 11th October, 1756, he again went to Leigh, which is the last time we find that fact recorded, although possibly other visits may have been made, as the journal requires great research, comprising upwards of 900 closely written pages, and has no index. This good man possessed a knowledge, of the utmost use to all physicians of souls, an acquaintance with medicine, and says, "Where we dined, a poor woman came to the door with two little children; they seemed to be half starved, as well as the mother, who was also shivering with an ague. She was extremely thankful for a little food, and still more so for a few pills, which seldom fail to cure that disorder."

Wesley's disciples at Leigh are still numerous, and at the present day their chapel is well filled, principally by fishermen and their families.'



Old Town Methodists 1902

## CONGRATULATIONS

And yet another anniversary this year. Congratulations to Ann and Barry Price on the celebration of their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 5 September.