



LEIGHWAY

The newsletter of the Leigh Society

YOU LUCKY PEOPLE

Here is an extra Leighway for you, hopefully, to enjoy. We found we had to send out some additional papers so thought we'd take the opportunity of a summer bonus. Hope you enjoy.

OUR NEW PRESIDENT AND COMPANY SECRETARY

Those of you who were able to attend the AGM will know that we appointed Cathy Cottridge as our New President. Cathy has been involved with the Society for probably more years that she would care to remember and until recently was the Treasurer and Company Secretary for the Heritage Centre.

We have also appointed a new Company Secretary, Clive Webster, to take over that role from Cathy. Clive has a wealth of experience in this field and we are sure his appointment will ease the burden of all the company rules and regulations which have to be followed.



Clive Webster

The meeting also confirmed the appointment of the Bishop of Chelmsford, Stephen Cottrell, as a vice president of the Society.

SOARING POSTAGE

This has been much in the news recently and several members have mentioned to me that they would be happy to receive Leighway by email. We have not fully done this in the past because there are usually additional leaflets included but as these are now all done on computer it should not be a problem. So if you would like to receive your Leighway over the ether please send an email to leighway@leighsociety.co.uk. Added advantages are of course a saving in printing costs and you can keep all your Leighways on your computer and they will have the photos in colour. If you are missing back copies they can be downloaded from our website www.leighsociety.co.uk

WE'RE GOOD FOR LEIGH

In our 40th year the Society has been awarded a Good for Leigh award by Leigh-on-Sea Town Council in recognition of all the work we have done over the years in respect of the conservation and enhancement of our conservation areas and the restoration of the Smithy and Plumbs Cottage. The award was presented to Ann and Margaret by Pat Holden, then Chairman of the Town Council at the Annual Town meeting in April.



MY FAMILY SEAT

This next piece, by member Sheila Osborne, shows that diligence in researching your family history certainly pays off – well done Sheila

I am the daughter of George 'Fred' Osborne, nicknamed 'Fatboy' who was born on Boxing Day 1901 on Leigh Hill - his Father James "Ratsy" Osborne was then a fishmonger. Later, my Grandfather was in the cockle trade, that led me to believe that my Family Seat was, as in my 1,950 childhood, a ramshackle wooden cockleshed, no 5 Cockle Row in Leigh Old Town - with my Osborne forebears there for generations as fishermen, shrimpers and cocklers. However, nay, thrice nay - recent evidence now informs me that my other Family Seat (tongue in cheek) is a 14th century half timbered Medieval Manor House, namely SOUTHCHURCH HALL, to the east of Southend and bequeathed to the Town by Alderman Thomas Dowsett, J.P. Magistrate and the first Mayor of Southend.

To explain, I shall revert, to something that my dear old maternal Grandma, always steadfastly maintained, but could not justify – that she was related to the well known civic family of the Dowsetts. In 1958, when I was 15 years old, Gran, born Bertha Alice Church in 1880 in South Shoebury, came to live with us at our house in Leigh, being the home of her eldest child, my Mother Lilian Osborne and my Father "Fatboy" Osborne. I recall so many times when Gran would mention her Dowsett connection, but in old age could not explain the link. Indeed we knew of the Dowsetts as the family gave two Mayors to Southend - Thomas and his son Herbert, with many things named after them, an avenue, a school and a hospital ward.

Yet, Mum and I could never reconcile Gran's claim, as after her husband - a soldier from Kent based at Shoebury Barracks - deserted her with three young daughters to bring up - poor old Gran was nigh on permanently impoverished, so a contrast to the well to do Dowsetts. However, despite all this, I often wondered if there was some grain of truth in it and determined that one day, somehow?? I would endeavour to investigate Gran's claims and perhaps solve the mystery. It was only on retirement that I had the time and know-how to pursue my family history and Gran's Dowsett claims were an imperative. I first evidenced that her parents were John Church, born 1848 a, in Great Wakering, who in 1810 married Martha Burrill born 1853 in South Shoebury, they would later live in old John Street, near the Barracks, South Shoebury village. I then looked for John's parents and here, joy oh joys, as I found what I was seeking!, John, born 1848 was the firstborn of William Church who had wed Rebecca Dowsett, born 1826 in Prittlewell!!

They married at Holy Trinity Southchurch, as Rebecca was then in that Parish. Initially, William was a grocer in Great Wakering and subsequently was a farmer of some acreage in Shoebury. Rebecca was the older sister by 12 years of Thomas Dowsett, the first Mayor of Southend. Thus, William and Rebecca were my Gran Bertha's paternal Grandparents.

Before Gran came to live with us in Leigh, she'd rented a series of rooms in Southchurch, and in her rather lonely mid-life, would often cross Chase Road rail bridge to sit in Southchurch Hall Gardens - a favourite haunt of hers and I am sure that she was unaware that the Hall had been given to the Town by her Grandmother's brother Thomas. As indeed, I too was unaware, when in the early 1960s, I worked in the Hall, when it was a Branch Library - I loved to sit and watch the ducks as I ate my sandwiches. Though, Gran Bertha had an even earlier connection to the Hall, long before Thomas Dowsett bequeathed it the Hall was Wiffens Farm and 13 year old Gran Bertha was 'in service', that is a live-in scullery maid, at a large house opposite the Farm in York Road. Every morning, young Bertha would be sent, with a jug to fetch the milk, for the house. So touching, as again, she could not, in her lowly position, have had an inkling of her connection to the Hall. I am sure that she looked back on her long hours of domestic service there, when sitting by the ponds in later life. How strange our lives can be.

After, evidentially establishing that the Dowsett name was in my line I then researched the parents of Rebecca Dowsett (my Great Great Grandmother). ~ ~ ~

These were James Dowsett, born about 1801 who married Martha Ingram, born in Leigh about 1799 - both of the were in Prittlewell at their marriage. James was a shoemaker/journeyman and had a largish clothing outfitters and bootshop, in East Street, Prittlewell. to the right of St. Mary's Church. The building is still there, no 11, I believe a fish and chip shop that I've had lots of fish suppers from, unaware that it was my 3 x Great Grandparents' shop, that I think they lived above.



The shop in East Street and the portraits of James and Martha Dowsett

Whilst researching, I was to have an amazing piece of luck, as via a family history website, I had contact from a lady in Derbyshire, who had my Gran Bertha, born 1880, in her tree. So unbelievably, she later sent me copy photos from a painted portrait of James and Martha

Dowsett, that formerly hung in the Prittlewell shop - she had got these from a Dowsett family member. It was so uncanny to see the likeness of these two elderly 3 x Great Grandparents in their Victorian attire. James died in 1815 at 74 years and Martha in 1819 at 80 years. I looked for their graves in St Mary's Churchyard, but few headstones and those illegible.

Incidentally, my Osborne Great Great Grandparents, William Osborne of Leigh, married Eliza Thipthorp of Prittlewell at St Mary's, Prittlewell in 1842.

As to Thomas Dowsett, the first Mayor, he died in 1906 (as did his sister Rebecca Church, my Great Great Grandmother) and is buried in Southend's Parish Church, St John's, by Pier Hill. Quite a grand obelisk style pink granite memorial, on which his two wives are also commemorated. The first being Eliza Bradley, who bore him 8 children, poor soul - and his second wife, who was born in Leigh. This was Clarissa Bentall, the daughter of Arthur Bentall of Brickhouse Farm, then at the corner of Blenheim Chase and Mountdale Gardens. Clarissa bore Thomas 3 more children and was the first Lady Mayoress to her husband.

So, with my Dowsett mission accomplished, my lasting regret is that I was unable to impart all this to my dear late Mother, Lilian Osborne, who would have been so interested and so wish I could have said "Sorry for our scepticism, Gran Bertha - you were right all along."

Sheila M Osborne

WORKING THE LAND CAN BE DANGEROUS TOO!

Living by the sea we are all only too aware of the dangers faced by those that earn their living from the waters. But we sometimes forget that Leigh was surrounded by agricultural land and farms and they too took their toll of our ancestors.

In 1881 Robert Collins from Leigh was working at Barlands Farm (also known as Greenshutters). One Saturday morning in February he was attending to the threshing machine and when cutting the bands he fell into the machine.

His left arm was so severely damaged that the doctors had to amputate it at the shoulder. He was 22 years old – what were his job prospects!!!

Robert was one of a large family whose mother Ann had been widowed 13 years earlier when her husband, James, had been killed while carting corn from a harvest field in Leigh.

Robert's accident must have placed a severe strain on the family and it is to be hoped his employers and the locals were able to help in the time of distress. Although James Collins came from Great Bursted, his wife, Ann, was a Leigh fisherman's daughter, her father being John Neave.

At the time of Robert's accident Barlands Farm was owned by Oliver Bentall, the nephew of Arthur Bentall who owned Brickhouse Farm in Leigh. It is, therefore, likely that both of the Collins were working for the Bentall family when they had their accidents.

Barlands or Greenshutters Farm was on what was then Leigh Road (now London Road) at the junction with Beedell Avenue.

In 1914 the site became the home of the Mascot Cinema which burned down in 1964.



The Mascot in 1936

BEFORE THE ARMADA

We all know that Leigh supplied several ships for Drake's Fleet to fight the Spanish Armada and we know from the records that Leigh was a ship building centre. But how did the rest of the world see us.

The Elizabethan age saw a great upsurge in exploration and consequently cartography.

Abraham Ortelius, a Flemish cartographer and geographer, is generally recognised as the creator of the first modern atlas entitled the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Theatre of the World). He is also believed to be the first person to imagine that the continents had once been joined together.

On 20 May 1570, Gilles Coppens de Diest at Antwerp issued Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, the "first modern atlas" (of 53 maps). Three Latin editions of this (besides a Dutch, a French and a German edition) appeared before the end of 1572; twenty-five editions came out before Ortelius' death in 1598; and several others were published subsequently, for the atlas continued to be in demand until about 1612. Most of the maps were reproductions and contain many discrepancies, but generally the atlas, with its accompanying text, was a monument of rare learning and industry.

And Leigh (or Ley) is on this map – alongside the north Thames only Tilbury - embarkation point - and Hadleigh - famous Castle - and Leigh are mentioned – so there must have been something going on here which made Leigh important enough to be on the map – could it be this very clever Belgian knew full well the capabilities of this little town?

Interestingly, my copy of the map was purchased at the Escorial Palace in Spain built by Philip II, whose Armada Leigh ships were ready to repel.

Carole



Extract from Ortelius' map (this is the correct orientation – on the map the UK is portrayed east/west not north/south)

WE'RE A HIT AT ST MICHAEL'S

The Heritage Centre recently hosted a visit from children of St Michael's School in Hadleigh Road. The children obviously enjoyed themselves and have written some very colourful letters, from which the following are some interesting snippets –

'Thank you for showing us around the cottage. I thought it was really interesting when I saw it I said 'I want to live there!'

'Thank you for showing us the men and women walking down the road with no cars, I cannot imagine doing that now'

'Thank you for showing me things that I didn't know before.'

'I loved the slide show. It was wonderful. My favourite one was the picture with the bus in it.'

'I liked when we saw the fishermen's cottage. Then I thought how lucky I was! I wouldn't want to share my bed with 10 other children – how uncomfortable.'

'My favourite slide was the house that was slit in half.'

'I can't believe that 10 or 8 children slept in a bed. It must have been uncomfortable. I bet it was stinky with their fishing nets.'

All of the letters said they would be coming back to the centre – so I think for Lynn, Mavis, Noel and Carole – a job well done.

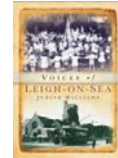
SNAKES AT LEIGH

In Spring 1879 there seems to have been a boom in the snake population of Leigh on the cliffs. The Chelmsford Chronicle reported that on 5 June, Edward Ray who was then 11 and the son of the local schoolmaster, had killed a large snake which had a field mouse in its mouth. At about the same time a favourite cat of Mr J Theobald at the Victoria Pottery made its way home with a snake coiled around its neck. The poor snake met its inevitable end even though the cat had not been bitten.

There is no indication of what sort of snakes these were, but the Essex Field Club website indicates that there are significant populations of adders on the coast of Essex. With over 500km of seawall and a high number of islands adders exist in discrete colonies. Adders are vulnerable to unsympathetic land management, persecution and in recent times land use changes for development

Adders are seen amongst the long grassland of the seawalls on Two Tree Island. At least 6 or 8 adult animals are found each spring on various parts of the seawall.

VOICES OF LEIGH



Judith Williams is an accomplished author of local and social history publications and as such you would expect an accomplished production from her. Her latest offering 'Voices of Leigh' does not disappoint in any way. Judith has managed to put together a huge selection of anecdotes and remembrances from a wide range of people which tells us much about our town, its residents and how it has been shaped over the bulk of the 20th century. The style is easy to read in small bite sizes – in fact this is not a book I would necessarily have read all in one go. It offers a delectable pot pourri of mini stories to dip in and out of when you have a few minutes to spare. I can imagine it as a great conversation starter at local gatherings and round the hearths of local families. It is a memory shaker, and it will tease, I am sure, more memories from those who read it and looking skyward remark 'Gosh, I'd forgotten all about that – but it reminds me of the time....' Memory plays funny tricks and it will be easy for some people to say 'I don't remember that happening...' or 'That isn't quite right.' But that to me is not the point of the book – it is not meant to be an historical record and should not be read as such. Everyone's memories are different, if they weren't this would be a boring world – and so what if it starts a few good hearted arguments over a pint – so much the better for it. A thoroughly good read.

Carole Mulroney

DEAR DIARY

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

6 September - Southwold Theatre – Five Finger Exercise by Peter Schaffer

22 September – Members’ Day – 40th Anniversary

17 October - Thames Estuary Shipwrecks – Claire Hunt

28 October – Lunch on Wilton

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

LEIGH-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES

67 Elm Road has been the home of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council since the late 1990s but the property had had a long history before the Town Council moved in, having been built by the Green family, well know local builders.



In 1898: Francis J Green, a carpenter and builder, and his family, moved from east London to Leigh and built and resided in a house in Lymington Avenue. He also bought land in Elm Rd to build a house to live in and a yard for his building business. Two years later in 1900 Francis built no 67 which was then known as 'Elmsleigh' and later as 41 Elm Road, while continuing to work in London. When the house was completed he moved in with wife Hannah, 3 sons and 1 daughter (2 older daughters who also came down from London had already left home) and established himself as a local builder in Leigh and surrounding area. Known as F J Green, Carpenter & Builder.

'Elmsleigh' was built with 3 living rooms and a kitchen on the ground floor, 3 bedrooms and a box room, bathroom/toilet on the first floor and 3 bedrooms on the second floor with an outside wash house, toilet, garden with summer house, builders yard / office. So a very substantial residence.

From 1900 onwards the front room/living room was used as a Chapel. Christadelphian meetings were held there and a notice in the front garden advertised meetings - F J Green and wife, Christadelphians. It is rumoured that there was an organ in one of the rooms. The building was used as a chapel until a new one was built in Pall Mall.

In 1919 Francis' sons Albert and Harold take over the business after Francis had a stroke – and the business now known as F J Green and Sons operated from the yard behind the house whilst the house continued as a home. (Albert lived in a house in Leigh Hall Road).

The Firm built more than 100 houses locally, the Coliseum Cinema in Elm Road, St Clements Church Hall, New Road Leigh, Rayleigh and Benfleet Methodist churches, parts of Dairy London Road and Dairy Crest Dairy depots at Hadleigh and Southchurch

The sons continued the business into the 1930's when Harold moved away and Albert continued on his own. During this time Elm Road was re-numbered and the property became the now familiar, 67 Elm Rd.

In 1929 Francis had died and Hannah continued to live in house until 1940. During the war the house was empty but outside continued to be used as yard (now the lower part of the Council car park). In 1946 a partnership was formed between Albert and his middle son Reginald and Reginald and his wife, Joan, moved in to No 67 after their marriage and had two sons David and Alan. Two rooms downstairs become offices and the rest of the property was the family home with the outside continuing as yard and garden.

In 1973 the business became a limited company, F J Green and Sons Ltd. run by Reginald and his eldest son, David. Reginald moved out in the early 1980's and the house was empty apart from the office and yard still in use. Between 1981 and 1985 David converted the 1st floor into a flat and moved in. Downstairs was still office with the yard outside. In 1985 David moved out and until 1988 the property was used only as a yard and offices by the Firm. In 1988 the Firm moved to a new yard in Hockley and Reginald retired.

Between 1988 and 1990 the property and yard remained empty. The in 1990 Reginald sold it to Southend Borough Council who demolished the yard and turned it into an extension of the public car park. By this time Leigh-on-Sea Town Council were looking for premises and conversion of the property took place and the Town Council moved in,

This property is, of course, situated between the much loved Police Station building where the Town Council was first housed, and the Community Centre.



Francis J Green, wife Hannah and family

Article and Green family picture supplied by

AND A GREAT DAY AT GREENWICH

Once again Ann provided members with a great day out at Greenwich. The Royal River exhibition is magnificent and the setting of Royal Greenwich could not be more picturesque. Well done Ann for another great day.

WATCH THE BIRDIE!



The avocet, more specifically the pied avocet, (*Recurvirostra avosetta*) is a strikingly elegant bird with black and white plumage. It looks like a monochrome version of a more colourful exotic bird that might be found inhabiting the limpid pools in places like Botswana or the river deltas of the Dutch Antilles. Indeed, avocets are widely distributed throughout the world but became extinct in Britain during the nineteenth century. However, thanks to the efforts of conservationists the avocet was reintroduced in the 1940's. In the Fifties, it became the emblem of the RSPB and has flourished ever since. Today, anyone observing an avocet stalking the shallow, brackish waters on its spindly blue legs and sweeping its upturned beak like a scythe will realise why it's become one of most iconic birds of the British Isles. Which also explains why I'm out here in the pouring rain on a chilly morning, blowing on my hands for warmth. It's called Avocet Watch and the intention is, obviously, to watch avocets. More specifically their nests, because they are in danger of predation. It seems remarkable, in this day and age, that there are still people wishing to collect birds' eggs but there it is. These so-called collectors consider stealing eggs to be fair game; viewing it more as a hobby or a scientific enquiry - as it was in Victorian times. Nowadays though, it is a criminal offence and there are hefty fines for anyone caught red-handed. The watch is organised by Essex Wildlife Trust who manage Two Tree Island. They work in unison with Southend Borough Council and the police. The watch runs from April to June and is broken down into four six hour shifts so there is coverage around the clock. The trust asks for volunteers each year to visit the hide and report anything suspicious. The night watch operates in pairs. My first shift is the 6am to midday watch. As I set out westwards along the gently undulating path the sun rises above my right shoulder. A cuckoo's call echoes from deep within hawthorn scrub while a silent owl flaps its large brown and white wings and disappears like a ghost. Soon the strident calls of unruly seabirds start to rise in the air. I am getting closer. I arrive at the hide,

open the door and step inside. It feels cold and dark but as I unclip the shutter and lever it upwards, bright light floods in. I pull up the bench seat and settle down, as if I'm about to watch a movie - which, in a sense I am. I peer out. The lagoon is directly in front of me, punctuated by a series of small mud islands or scrapes. Away to the right, signs of human activity as the site of the 2012 Olympic Mountain Biking competition looms in the distance; and to the left, the eerie pipes and chimney stacks of industrial Canvey. Yet here, directly in front of me, is a world of unfettered wildlife, its feathered inhabitants blissfully unaffected by encroaching urbanisation. I take out my binoculars and scan across the lake. I'm checking that the avocet hens and their nests are undisturbed. Their eggs are some of the most desirable around; creamy white and speckled, and laid in clutches of between two and five, each one needs protecting. But it's not quite what I see. The avocets are nervous, chasing one another across the shallow waters, stepping onto the islands on their reed-thin legs, prodding and probing before restlessly heading back into the water. This skittish behaviour is only accentuated when a crow appears in the eastern skies. Scrambled like spitfire pilots, they soar upwards and meet their aggressor head on, beating it until it turns in retreat. But this isn't their main source of their concern, it's the gulls - several hundred of them - that this year have inundated the lagoon and turned it into a nesting colony. They've also taken the best seats in the house: on the scrape, towards the culvert and close to the creek. After several more scans I conclude there are no avocet nests. Maybe, it's too early in the season...at least that's what I hope. My second shift is a week later, the graveyard watch, from midnight to six a.m. When I arrive at the car park the other volunteer is nowhere to be seen. I glance at my watch, ten past twelve. I sling my knapsack over my shoulder and make my solitary way across the reserve. It's a foul night; cold, raining and blustery, strictly for birds I'd say. There is no moon and the beam from my torchlight points weakly into Stygian gloom. As I head for the hide I begin to wonder what the heck I'm doing here but then I answer my own question. At this time of night, avocets are more susceptible to predation than any other time and primarily from humans. At night the island has a completely different complexion, denser almost uniform. There is very little to see, muffled sounds break out through the velvety darkness but most of all there is the sense of peace and a world asleep. My stint in the hide is short-lived, everything is in order. Even noisy gulls have to rest sometimes.

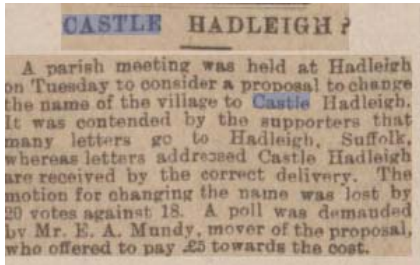
Clive Webster

Anyone wishing to take part in this year's watch can contact Louise Morris of the Essex Wildlife Trust on e-mail LouiseMorris@southend.gov.uk. There's still time to make a difference!

CASTLE HADLEIGH

According to a local newspaper in January 1913 because of the continuing confusion between Hadleigh, Suffolk and Hadleigh, Essex there was an intention to rename our Hadleigh as Castle Hadleigh.

Later that year in August the following press report appeared – our colleagues in Hadleigh are seeing if they can find out what actually happened – if anything.



THE POOCH'S PILLS

In the Nottingham Evening Post of 25 November 1930 it was reported that in the Offertory plate at St Clement's at the Thanksgiving Service an envelope marked 'The tablets to be taken three times daily' had turned up.

At the Parochial meeting the following week Canon King confessed that he had inadvertently put his dog's pills in the plate instead of money.

This was also reported in the Hull Daily Mail – obviously a slow news day.

THE SEA, THE SEA

In April we were swamped by programmes, books, articles about the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. It is an ever fascinating story and it is doubtful whether the 100th anniversary will bring an end to the speculation and historical research into the tragedy.

But people who live and work on the sea are always aware of the dangers it holds for the casual and expert sailor. Indeed, There are many other sea tragedies within living memory which we can never forget like the Herald of Free Enterprise and the Torrey Canyon which bring home the mighty power of the sea.

On 23 February 1907 the Liverpool Mercury reported that the Great Eastern Railway Company's Steamer, the Berlin, from Harwich to the Hook of Holland had stranded at the North Pier at the Hook and broken up. 91 passengers and 50 crew were reported stranded close to the shore and there was every hope that they would be rescued. It was not to be. Heavy seas caused the Berlin to break up and virtually all on board were lost.

Lifeboats tried in vain to reach the stranded vessel and people were seen clinging to the wreckage.

Most of the crew came from the Harwich area.

At the time this was one of the worst disasters in the history of cross-channel traffic.



The Berlin

Reports state that the Berlin ran ashore at the entrance of the river Maar, leading to Rotterdam. A terrific south-west gale was blowing inshore, and drove the steamer on a sand-bank close to the northern jetty as she was trying to enter the new waterway. The heavy seas quickly pounded the vessel to pieces. The lifeboat of Captain Jansen, which had a record of 336 lives saved, made desperate efforts all day to reach the wreck, and rescue any possible survivors. Captain Parkerston of the Berlin, who survived, found himself in the water, surrounded by floating timbers. One of these he seized, and succeeded in keeping himself afloat until he saw a lifeboat. His cry for help was heard and he was picked up and brought ashore. On the foredeck of the Berlin at the moment of the disaster there were about one hundred people, all of whom were hurled into the sea. Troops were detailed to patrol the coast to ensure the safety of pieces of mail that might be washed ashore. Captain Jansen and other reserves, praised the courage of Prince Henry of the Netherlands, who went out in a small boat, and worked hard pulling at the oars and helping to hoist the survivors aboard. This was not accomplished without difficulty, owing to the heavy surf, but the rescuers managed to get a line aboard the wreck, and make the other end fast to the lighthouse. The survivors then climbed down to where they were carried, one by one, through the surging water breast high and placed in a small boat, whence they were transferred to the pilot boat. Captain Jansen said he was compelled to leave two women and a child on board, because they did not dare to make the descent of the rope, owing to their completely exhausted condition. In fact, they appeared to be dying. The boatmen intended to try to board the wreck, wrap the two women and child in waterproof sacks, and lower them into the boat. The wind died down, but the cold was intense, and the fury of the sea terrible.

It was later discovered that the wreck of the Berlin was resting on the remains of the British steamer Leeds, which had been lost on the same spot in 1882.

As with many disasters, a fund was set up for the relief of the survivors and it was reported that Leigh fishermen raised over £11 towards the relief of the widows and orphans of the lost seamen.

This was not an inconsequential sum being equal to about £1000 today.

PLANNING

There have been quite a few major planning proposals over the last few months and many of you will have read about these in the local papers.

St George's in Hadleigh Road has been the subject of yet another unsuitable application and the Society objected strongly to the proposal which the Borough Council has refused.

The proposals for a pent house on the top of St Clement's Arcade have been approved on appeal despite objections from the Society and the Borough Council.

No doubt you will have seen the acres of news space written concerning the granting of the permission for the St Clement's Hall site without the community facilities and affordable housing elements.

The Society objected to the erection of a canopied walkway from the pavement to the Boatyard Restaurant which was out of keeping with the Conservation Area. The Borough Council agreed and refused permission.

We also objected very strongly to the proposed change of use of Belton Lodge (the solitary house on Belton Way which has been boarded up) from residential to office use. This would not have made any difference to the appearance of the new property which has already been approved on the site but we felt it was inappropriate to introduce a business use into an area of Green Belt, especially situated as this is on an open area. Our views are in line with Government policy on the Green Belt.

Undercliff Gardens is not in a conservation area but does nevertheless, have special policies to assist its protection. We recently objected to the development of a new property in the Gardens which we felt would be inappropriate. Once again the Borough Council have refused the application.

JOHN KENSIT



John Kensit was the founder of the Protestant Truth Society which was against the use of ritualism in the Church of England. At the end World War One when towns and villages were deciding on the form of memorial they would erect to commemorate their war dead Leigh decided to erect a life sized crucifix in the churchyard to honour the Town's fallen. This decision

attracted the attention of the 'Kensits' and on Sunday, 6 April 1919 several hundred people attended a meeting in the churchyard to hear them speak. The press report does not say there was any trouble but on the advice of the police the meeting was closed.

THE RECEIVER OF DROITS

DROITS OF ADMIRALTY.
LEIGH, ESSEX.
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
By the Receiver of Droits,
For the benefit of the parties concerned, on Friday,
April 21st, at Ten o'clock precisely,
31 ANCHORS, from two to 20 cwt.; 540 fathom of
chain corresponding, ships' yards, masts, booms,
do.; standing and running rigging, main and top-gallant
sails, nine boats, 20 balks of fir timber, poles, &c.
Catalogues at the Hotels, Southend; of Alfred Rodd,
Rochford; and of Mr. Cockett, Custom-house, Leigh.

Chelmsford Chronicle 14 April 1865

The post of Receiver of Droits lasted between 1691-1857

The full title was Receiver of the Rights and Perquisites of the Admiralty and appointments were usually made by Admiralty warrant. The salary, which was paid out of the receipts from the perquisites, was originally £300. It was raised to £400 in 1800. In 1854 provision was made for the office to be abolished on the next vacancy when its duties were to be transferred to the Board of Trade. The office ceased to exist in 1857. Despite this similar adverts in Leigh were still appearing in 1876.

"Droits of admiralty" were certain customary rights or perquisites, formerly belonging to the Lord High Admiral, but now to the crown, for public purposes and paid into the Exchequer. These *droits* consisted of flotsam, jetsam, ligan*, treasure, deodand**, derelict (maritime) within the Admiral's jurisdiction: all fines, forfeitures, ransoms, recognizances and pecuniary punishments; all sturgeons, whales, porpoises, dolphins, grampuses and such large fishes; all ships and goods of the enemy coming into any creek, road or port, by durance or mistake; all ships seized at sea, salvage, etc., with the share of prizes such shares being afterwards called "tenths", in imitation of the French, who gave their admiral a *droit de dixième*..

*ligan - goods (or wreckage) on the sea bed that is attached to a buoy so that it can be recovered

**Deodand - a thing forfeited or given to God, specifically, in law, an object or instrument which becomes forfeit because it has caused a person's death

AND FINALLY

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