



LEIGHWAY

ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO CHRISTMAS?

It seems unbelievable that it is creeping up again – where did 2013 go? Well for the Leigh Society it has been going very well. For the first time ever we ventured up the Hill to the ‘top town’ and held a very successful open day in the Community Centre (what a boon that place is).

We had talks, competitions, displays and sales tables and we also encouraged people to bring in their memorabilia for scanning into the archives. We invited several guest exhibitors – the Endeavour Trust and the burgeoning Leigh Maritime Group and local authors as well as the Hadleigh and Thundersley Community Archive.

We ran a photographic competition and an art competition for the under 12s. These were judged by Simon Fowler, photographer and Lester Hills, Leigh Art Trail. Our thanks to Studio 2000 and Leigh-on-sea.com and Kodak Express for helping with these competitions and to David Amess for presenting the prizes to Anne Hinton and Rosie Warren-Brown for first and second place in the photography respectively. The Under 12s winner was Freya Downes aged 6 of Leigh Infants School.

Thanks are also to Sutherland Printers and Leigh Print & Copy.

The event was such a success, with many people bringing in archives for scanning and stories and family history information that we will be doing it again. We also joined several new members. We look forward to growing the Society for the benefit of everyone who loves Leigh.

LEIGH LIBRARY

Many of you will have seen the potential changes to the library service in Leigh and hopefully signed the Town Council’s

petition. The consultation by the Borough is due to end on 8 September so if you haven’t responded DON’T DELAY go to http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/10109/libraries-news_and_events/1409/library_services_review/1 and make your views known. It is vital to Leigh and our Library to retain the service and the building in that use so that the experience we all enjoy of using the library and the gardens/play area/town continues to be a treasured part of Leigh life.

DEAR DIARY

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

21-22 September – Old Leigh Regatta

9 October – Researching your house and old buildings – Jenny Butler of Essex Record Office

29 October - Brick Lane Music Hall

6 November - Proposed Path through South Essex Marshes - John Meehan -Parklands Manager (Essex County Council)

HERITAGE CENTRE VISITORS

We get many and varied visitors over the year to the Heritage Centre and this is just an example for January – May.

From the USA we had visitors from Las Vegas, Utah, Minnesota and New York. From the rest of the Americas people came from Canada and Mexico. From Australasia several visitors from Australia and New Zealand.

From Asia came Chinese and Russian visitors as well as representatives of the Philippines, and we also had visitors from Tehran, Iran in the Middle East.

Closer to home in Europe were Dutch, Polish, Italian, Lithuanian, Spanish, German, French, Irish, Swiss, Swedish, Scottish, Czech, Slovenian and Welsh.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LEIGH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

The inaugural meeting of Leigh Horticultural Society was held on Thursday, 4th June 1925, at Elm Hall (now Leigh Community Centre) under the chairmanship of Mr Cranley Perry, a keen local gardener who lived in Vernon Road. At the time, Leigh was undergoing rapid expansion, with large housing estates being built on countryside that had hitherto been farmland. New home-owners were eager to grow flowers and vegetables on their virgin plots and many were quick to join the fledgling horticultural society.

An early event was a competition for the best-kept garden, launched in 1926 and proving popular over many years. In the 1930s, summer flower shows were held at Chalkwell Park, featuring marching bands, dance troupes, side shows, and special events for local schools. The show benches were erected under canvas and well supported by members of the flourishing society. By the end of the decade, the LHS Summer Flower Shows had become an important feature in the town's calendar of major events. However, horticultural exuberance was soon to be dashed by the outbreak of the Second World War. The *Dig for Victory* campaign was underway and the lawns and flower beds of Chalkwell Park were ploughed up for the production of vegetables, to augment the many allotment sites around the town. Leigh Horticultural Society went through a period of decline as men and women were called up to assist in the war effort. Nevertheless, within a few weeks of VE Day, the dormant society was resurrected under the chairmanship of Mr W. Finch, who lived in Oakleigh Park Drive.

A newcomer to the committee at this time was Harry Smith - or 'Black Harry' as he was irreverently known to the pupils at Westcliff High School for Boys, where he taught chemistry. A highly gifted gardener, Harry was to feature prominently in the fortunes of Leigh Horticultural Society for over twenty years. Once again, Chalkwell Park hosted the Society's summer shows, visitor numbers in 1948 topping 4000. Autumn Shows were held at St. Clement's Hall, and by the time of the Society's Silver Jubilee in 1950, membership exceeded 1000. In 1954, Ken McCreadie, Southend's Parks Superintendent and an active LHS member, booked the flower arranger, Julia Clements, to demonstrate her skill to LHS members. The event proved so successful that it led to the founding of the Leigh Floral Arrangement Group.

In the 50s, the chrysanthemum was a popular flower with many gardeners and the Society held an annual competition dedicated to the showing of these flamboyant blooms, usually held over two days in October at St. Clement's Hall. The Society was also a regular participant at the Southend Town Shows, winning many trophies for the excellence of their floral displays. LHS shows continued to flourish through the years, the only setback being cancellation of the Autumn Show in 1965, due to a fire at St. Clement's Hall.

Harry Smith was an outstanding Chairman, serving the Society in this role over 22 years, from 1952 until his unexpected death in 1974. He had many contacts in the world of horticulture and attracted several interesting speakers to the Society's winter talks, including the well-known Essex

gardener, Beth Chatto, and Fred Whitsey, then editor of *Popular Gardening* magazine.

In the 1970s, interest in gardening burgeoned, helped by BBC TV's popular programme, '*Gardeners' World*'. With the loss of Harry Smith, Ken Price stepped into the breach, chairing the Society until the mid-1990s. His wife, Dorothy, was a keen and successful exhibitor at the LHS shows, winning numerous awards over many years. Her father, Harry Proctor, had been an early member of the LHS in the late 1920s. In 1970, radio and stage entertainer, Fred Yule, a member of the LHS who lived in Park Road, was invited to become the Society's President. He is perhaps best remembered for his role in the successful WWII radio programme, '*I.T.M.A.*', with Tommy Handley.



A Summer Show in the 1980s, before the doors opened to the public.

The early 1980s saw membership fluctuating between 300 and 350, but was to increase considerably when Southend Council reintroduced the popular Town Shows. The LHS's superb floral displays attracted much interest, and many new members were signed up over the next few years. By the end of the 80s, membership stood at over 440. Many of the long-serving committee members now felt it was time to retire and hand over management to a younger generation of enthusiasts, who were eager to ensure a prosperous future for the Society.

The new committee introduced many new events, a popular one being the Annual Garden Trail, with members opening their gardens for the enjoyment of other members and their friends. Members were now kept up to date with the affairs of the Society via *The Link*, the newsletter issued regularly throughout the year. The popularity of the summer outings continued, with regular excursions to places of interest. A history of the Society, *The Flowering of a Community*, was published in 2000 to mark the Society's 75th anniversary, and, in 2005, to celebrate the 80th anniversary, the Society hosted an edition of the popular BBC Radio 4 programme, *Gardeners' Question Time*. Much of the success of the Society at this time must be accorded to the stewardship of the hard-working Secretary, Charlie Ablethorpe.

Two local allotment societies affiliated to the LHS - Manchester Drive Allotment Society in 1985 and Leigh Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Association in 2009 - their members eagerly participating in the flower shows and other LHS activities. And when Leigh Town Council introduced its annual *Best Front Garden* competition, the LHS were invited to participate in the

judging, the awards being presented by the Leader of the Council at the Winter Show.

In recent years, the greatest upheaval to the affairs of the Society was the Church's decision to sell St. Clement's Hall to a property developer. Many LHS members were in the forefront of the unsuccessful campaign to save the venue for the local community, which had been the Society's show base for over sixty years. Fortunately, another church, keen to support the local community, came to the rescue; Leigh Road Baptist Church offered their superb events complex to the LHS for their shows and meetings.

Today, under the excellent chairmanship of Julia Tetley, the popularity of the Leigh Horticultural Society continues to prosper, with a membership of well over 300 keen gardeners, enjoying a full programme of flower shows, meetings and coach outings. Full details of the Society's activities and events, together with membership information, can be found on the LHS website www.leighgardening.org.uk

Jim Sanctuary

STARTING OUT

A few months ago I visited one of the most significant sites in Britain, nay in the world. It is a feature that has changed the shape of history and affected billions of people right across the globe. It could even be called the cornerstone of our civilisation. So where is this epoch-changing place? Is it the scene of a tumultuous battle, Hastings, Bosworth Field? Or is it the site of a momentous shift in England's governance like Runnymede? Or maybe it's a Neolithic temple like Stonehenge or the birthplace of some great poet or physicist? No, it's none of those. And it all begins in an unprepossessing field, deep in the heart of rural Gloucestershire.

Under a wintry sky, I make my way circumspectly down a gravel path. I cross the railway line and follow a mossy dry stone wall along the perimeter. I look down and there it is, lying there quietly in a hollow as if slightly embarrassed, the reason for my journey. A pair of crows flutter into a threadbare oak tree but other than that, the field is bereft of life. No tourist information kiosks, no car parks, no coach loads of day trippers, no restaurants, not even a signpost, just this muddled field.

I trudge across the field, avoiding the deep tractor tyres and squelching mud. A clanking gate is open. I pass through and arrive at my destination. A stone marker lies underneath a gnarled, leafless tree.

Now some would argue that the source of the River Thames is just the start of a river - nothing more, nothing less. Yet consider what life would be like without it. No towns would exist along its route: no Reading, no Maidenhead, no Windsor, no Eton, (not even a city like Oxford, with its seats of learning), no Tilbury, no Dartford, no Southend, not even Leigh. And when you consider a world without London, it takes on another role altogether because this is not just a river, it is a conduit; a means of transport, a provider of food and water for crops and livestock and the main artery for trade and commerce for over two thousand years.

The Thames has been an outlet for ideas and languages for centuries. From its very banks explorers have set off, discovered and colonised places right across the globe. And if you take London away, you have to remove its parliament, palaces and Inns of Court that have shaped our lives since feudal times. But there's more. Without the Thames, Greenwich Meantime would not exist, neither would Handel's Water Music, the Kinks' Waterloo Sunset, Wind in the Willows, Three Men in a Boat, Swan Upping, some of Turner's and Pissarro's finest paintings, the Boat Race and probably not even our own Heritage Centre.

Over time the river has been a haven; providing refuge for émigrés like the Huguenots and the Jews, escaping the pogroms of mainland Europe. And also to nature for millions of wading birds like our own Dark-bellied Brent geese, that seek out these rich sedimentary mudflats. And of course without the Thames there would be no '53 floods, Dunkirk might never have succeeded, and a young bard by the name of Will Shakespeare would never have got his plays performed.

The Thames feeds our civilisation, but also provides a sense of time and place. It is a constant reminder of the ebb and flow not just of tidal water but of life itself. Like many people, particularly those of us fortunate to live in Leigh, the river holds an endless fascination for me. Its reassuring presence is there for all to see. It is, in fact, impossible to think of England without the River Thames because the Thames is, quite simply, England.

And so I came to be actually standing on the very spot from whence it came, seeing its birth happening over and over again, an everlasting font of life. Only I wasn't because there was no water actually visible. Somehow I'd imagined something dramatic; a great fissure of rock deep in the earth's core, a gurgle of noise and a spring bursting out of the ground and splashing joyfully all around. But no, not even a bubble.

And, as I looked around this deserted field, an image popped into my mind. It is 1963. I am standing in line on parade with my Lifeboy comrades. We are all dressed in navy blue jersey, shiny brass badge pinned to our chests, regulation grey shorts, grey woollen socks and black leather shoes. Perched on our heads is a sailor's hat. We sing loud and lustily:

High in the hills, down in the dales, happy and fancy free,
Old Father Thames keeps rolling along, down to the mighty sea.

What does he know, what does he care? nothing for you or me,

Old Father Thames keeps rolling along, down to the mighty sea.

He never seems to worry, doesn't care for Fortune's fame,
He never seems to hurry, but he gets there just the same.
Kingdoms may come, Kingdoms may go, whatever the end may be,

Old Father Thames keeps rolling along, down to the mighty sea.

So that was the point of the river, to keep rolling along, down to the mighty sea.

The sign above my head read: 'Thames Path - Thames Barrier 184 miles'. So, having paused for the obligatory photo opportunity, I struck out across the sloping meadow, away from the watery afternoon sun towards the east, from whence I'd come. How the source becomes a proper river and winds its way through Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and into Oxfordshire before finally arriving at the sea, well, that's where I'm heading next and is part of another story.

LEIGH HOUSE AND SIR ANTHONY DEANE



Sir Anthony Deane (c.1638–1720?), was a shipbuilder, born in Harwich, the son of a master mariner. Having been bound to a master shipwright of a naval dockyard, he emerged from his training as more than a mere craftsman. He rose rapidly, and was assistant master shipwright at Woolwich by 1660, at the age of twenty-two.

Two years later Deane first met Samuel Pepys, a member of the Navy Board. Pepys found him 'a very able man, and able to do the King's service' (Pepys, *Diary*, 18 Aug 1662). Pepys's diary contains many references to Deane, as he instructed Pepys in the art of shipbuilding.

Deane's career as an active naval shipbuilder declined when he went to London in 1674 to become a member of the Navy Board as commissioner of the victualling accounts. In 1675 Deane visited France on the orders of the King, to build two yachts for Louis XIV. This was held against him in 1679, during the exclusion crisis, when he was accused of giving information to the French and imprisoned in the Tower of London with Pepys. He successfully defended himself but left office in 1680. He was elected to the Royal Society in 1681, serving on its council, and made a substantial living as a commercial shipbuilder for five years. He demanded a salary of £1000 to return to the navy as a member of a special commission for the repair of the fleet in 1686. He and Pepys were again imprisoned in 1689, but released in 1690.

Deane's *Doctrine of Naval Architecture* was written in 1670, and gives the clearest account, before the eighteenth century, of how the hull of a warship was designed.

Little is known about Deane's family life, except that his first wife, Anne, died in childbirth in 1677 and that he married, on

22 July 1678, Christian, widow of Sir John Dawes. He cited his fifteen children as one of the reasons why he needed to be paid £1000 in 1686. In his early days he was often accused of arrogance, having a quarrel with the lord chancellor in 1664 over the felling of timber in his private estate; two years later he was accused by the captain of the *Colchester* of 'having an uncivil tongue ... in regard he was a tradesman'. He died at Charterhouse Square in London, probably in 1720.



Sir Anthony Deane

Leigh House was originally known as Black House and stood west of St Clement's, at the top of Elm Road facing the Broadway. It was demolished to allow the creation of Broadway West.

The known owners after the house was built probably by Stephen Bonner in 1620 are as follows –

Sir Anthony Deane used the house as an occasional residence until 1670 when it was purchased by Thomas Printupp whose family appears in the earliest registers of St Clement's Church. Later the house was owned by Elizabeth Stevens and Anne the wife of Sir Edward Whittaker (Admiral of the White) and then Charles Perry, Elizabeth and John Finch and Giles Westwood.

Following this it was owned by John Loten, the Customs Officer for Leigh who in 1792 planted 2 cedar trees in the garden. One of these survives to this day – the other was a victim of the 1987 hurricane. A slice through the tree is on display in the Heritage Centre.

David Montague, owner of the Victoria Pottery also owned the house at one time followed by P C Barker and then F.J.C Millar a local barrister – he donated the clock in the church tower. The last owner was Dr Watson (minus Sherlock one presumes).

CAEDMON SCHOOL

Members will recall we had some interesting items on Caedmon School in 2008 Leighways. The new occupiers of the building want to do a story board for display in the building about its history. We have been able to provide information for them before and after the war but does anyone know what the buildings were used for during the war i.e. the period when the children had been evacuated away from Leigh.

Please let Carole know on carole.mulroney@btinternet.com or via the Heritage Centre.

BRANDED

The Heritage Centre now stocks branded mugs (£3) and canvas shopping bags (£2) for that memento for friends who have moved away.

DID YOU HEAR VOICES AT MAPLE DURHAM

In our January 2012 edition Mike Plummer shared with us his memories of being a pupil at Maple Durham School after the war and mentioned the then owner Miss Emmeline Dodd.

An interesting news article in the Daily Telegraph of 14 February 1939 shows that Miss Dodd had been at Maple Durham throughout the war years and before.

The article was headed – *'The Spirit World Perturbed - £400 payment alleged to have been suggested at séance – You must remember the Medium said Grey Feather.'*

This was a court case where the judge was hearing a claim for the recovery of £400 said to have been paid to a spiritualist medium named Mrs Bruce who was controlled by Grey Feather, a dead North American Indian.

A Mr Chennells and Miss Dodd were the executors of the will of Marjorie Dodd, Emmeline's sister. She had died the previous year. The charge against the medium was that she had obtained £400 by fraud and undue influence.

Both the Dodd sisters were believers in spiritualism and had attended séances conducted by Mrs Bruce. Mrs Bruce had administered to them what was said to be healing and gave them advice alleged to be supernatural in origin. This is where Grey Feather came in on the act. As a result of the words from the other side Marjorie Dodd apparently recovered £1500 of damages following a road accident she had suffered.

However, Grey Feather's advice also was that because of this beneficial result Mrs Bruce should receive a reward of £400. This was done and Mrs Bruce duly went on holiday to Australia.

In evidence Emmeline said that the accident had left her sister with an affliction of the brain. She had paid a shilling for each séance and Grey Feather had spoken in perfect English upping his initial request from £200 to £400 at a second séance.

Although Mrs Bruce was not present the judge had no hesitation in finding that she had taken advantage of the sisters although he did not agree that there had been fraud. He did however enter judgment for the sisters in the sum of £400 + 3.5% interest.

In September 1939 a meeting of the creditors of May Ada Bruce, spiritualist of Capel Terrace, Southend met and appointed a Trustee to oversee the claim of Miss Dodd.

ON BROADWAY

Member Carol Edwards is writing another book about a street in Leigh, the Broadway. If anyone has interesting information photos or memorabilia about the Broadway please get in touch with Carol at thecaroledwards@gmail.com or at 28 Exford Avenue, Westcliff on Sea, SSO OEF

MANGLES AND BELLOWS

The Society has been reviewing the exhibits in the Heritage Centre and Plumbs Cottage to enhance our exhibitions. Does anyone have a set of small bellows or a small mangle - of an appropriate age of course, which they would like to donate to the Heritage Centre? We would be most grateful for such contributions to the displays.

THE MAYFLOWER AND PILGRIM FATHERS DEBATE AND THE LEIGH CONNECTION

You may have read in the newspapers that Harwich is claiming to be the place most associated with the Pilgrim Fathers, who set sail to the New World from Plymouth on 6 September 1620, made landfall at Cape Cod on 9 November and then continued to their anchorage at the place they named Plymouth, New England on 16 December.

It is true that it is only by chance that Plymouth was involved at all. The facts seem to be that two boats were originally commissioned for the 1620 voyage, the Mayflower and The Speedwell. The ship Speedwell travelled to Holland and picked up English separatists who had first settled in Leiden in 1608. These first Pilgrims had tried to flee from religious persecution in this country in 1607, but they were betrayed and locked up in cells that can still be seen today in the Guildhall at Boston on the coast of Lincolnshire, my own hometown.

Most of these people came from Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire. They eventually got to Holland and were joined by others from different Protestant communities in England, all fleeing from the tough line taken by King James 1 against anyone seeming to undermine the authority of the Anglican faith. More than 300 clergymen had been dismissed in 1604 and many fled to Holland with their congregations after that date. Some of these people were also from Essex.

So in 1620 Speedwell arrived in Delftshaven 25 miles south of Leiden and from there the ship went to Southampton to join the Mayflower. Besides the people from Holland who were originally from Essex on the Speedwell, there were on the Mayflower, the Captain, Christopher Jones from Harwich, Christopher Martin from Billericay who was the Governor of the Ship with his wife Maria, her brother Solomon Prower and their servant John Langmore. Also on board were Peter Browne of Burstead, Richard Gardiner of Harwich and John Alden, a cooper, also from Harwich and related to the Captain.

The two ships then set sail from Southampton on 5 August 1620. After leaving Southampton the plan went badly wrong as Speedwell was found to be leaking very badly and they had to put in for repair at Dartmouth. Once repaired they set off again on 23 August, but very soon realised that Speedwell was not seaworthy and they then pulled in to Plymouth. Finally on 6 September only the overcrowded Mayflower departed with 102 migrants on board and about 50 crew, leaving 18 – 20 people in Plymouth.

During the voyage one crewman and one passenger died and Oceanus Hopkins was born. Not all of these people were fleeing from religious persecution, but were hired hands, servants, or farmers recruited by London merchants, some of them originally destined for an already existing settlement in Virginia.

The captain and part owner of the Mayflower, Christopher Jones was born in Harwich in 1570, married twice in the local church, was made Freeman of Harwich in 1601 and Member of the Corporation of Harwich in 1604. In 1611 together with his second wife and family he moved to Rotherhithe in south east London, probably for economic reasons.

On setting sail for the return voyage from America on 5 April 1621, Jones records that his sailors had been decimated by disease, he had lost his boatswain, his gunner, three quartermasters, the cook, and more than a dozen sailors. The Mayflower made excellent time on her voyage back to England. The westerlies that had buffeted her coming out pushed her along going home and she arrived at the home port of Rotherhithe in London on 6 May 1621 – less than half the time it had taken her to sail to America.

Christopher Jones died not long after, in 1621 and is buried in St Mary's Church Rotherhithe.

The colony at Plymouth, the first permanent settlement in New England, grew steadily and in spite of many hardships new settlers joined them there, travelling on Fortune in 1621, Sparrow in 1622 and Lyon Whelp in 1629. These later ships brought more Essex migrants and by 1630 the population was 300.

It seems very likely that the Mayflower set sail from Rotherhithe and stopped at Leigh to be provisioned for the voyage and pick up the Essex passengers. It would make no sense for the Pilgrims from Billericay to travel to Rotherhithe or to Southampton and as foodstuffs had to be taken into London from Essex it would also make sense that they would stop off for provisioning at Leigh. Christopher Martin probably had a hand in this. They would have had some live animals with them such as sheep, goats, and poultry and it is believed that the flour was ground at a mill in Billericay.

There are many Essex associations with other parts of America, Some famous names are John Winthrop from Great Stambridge who became Governor of Massachusetts and William Vassall of Eastwood, who emigrated in 1635 with his wife Anne and six children and eventually owned a tenth of the land of the state of Massachusetts.

Further confusions arose when I found that there was a John Vassall who owned a boat called the Mayflower. However there are no records of this particular Mayflower after 1594, but it is recorded that this Mayflower was fitted out for the Armada in 1588. Was this boat fitted out at Leigh? *1

*1 Somewhere I have a reference to John Vassall owning land at Brook Street, Brentwood and growing wheat etc – this may have been provisioning for the Mayflower – also he lived at Cockethurst, Eastwood and William Vassall mentioned above is his son. William's

Furthermore another ship called the Mayflower made a voyage from London to New England, Plymouth Colony in 1629 carrying 35 passengers from the Pilgrim congregation in Leiden. This same ship also made the crossing in 1630, 1633, 1634 and 1639. It was lost at sea during the same voyage in 1642 with 140 passengers on board bound for Virginia. This was not the same Mayflower that established the colony in Plymouth New England in 1620. But could these boats have also called in at Leigh for provisioning? Thus the locals would have got used to the Pilgrim boats at Leigh and people from Essex would have joined them there. If the refit for the Armada ship also called Mayflower took place at Leigh it is easy to see where the account of the Pilgrim ship Mayflower being refitted at Leigh comes from.

So far, to the best of my knowledge, there is no further documentary evidence to establish the Leigh connection, but local legend and the practicality of the situation of Leigh on the estuary seem to indicate there was definitely a connection.

Plymouth lays claim to the place the Mayflower left from because, by chance, it was the last place in England the Pilgrims set foot in. However there is also a tradition that the ship found their water to be contaminated and they had to stop yet again to get fresh water at Newlyn in Cornwall.

Perhaps Rotherhithe should be given prominence as the place the boat originally left from?

Years before the voyage of the Mayflower the ships Godspeed, Discovery and Susan Constant, carrying 144 men and boys, many of them from Essex, set sail from Blackwall pier in London on 19 December 1606 under the overall command of Captain Christopher Newport (1560-1617) who also came from Harwich. These people were not fleeing religious persecution but were looking for the North West route to China and also looking for gold. They arrived at Chesapeake Bay on 26 April 1607 and founded Jamestown, Virginia. It could be said that this was truly the first successful settlement in the New World and was settled by sons of Harwich, Essex.

As we draw closer to the 400th anniversary of the voyage of the Mayflower I am sure more views will be put forward. What do you think?

Jennifer Simpson May 2013 - References "Pilgrims and Adventurers" by JR Smith ERO publications 1992 and "Places of the Pilgrim Fathers" by James Dowsing, Sunrise Press date not known. Wikipedia

EASTWOOD VICAR WHO INSPIRED A POET

One of John Vassall's close friends was the vicar of Eastwood, Samuel Purchas and the poet he inspired was Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Purchas was the vicar of Eastwood from 1604 to 1613 and he is represented in the stained glass west window

daughter, Judith, married Resolved White, one of the Mayflower Pilgrims. Carole Mulrone

of the church there. He collected travellers' tales which were published under the title 'Purchas his Pilgrimes'.

One of the tales he collected was from Andrew Battell, a native of Leigh. He and Abraham Cocke, also of Leigh, mounted an expedition in 1589 in the 'May Morning' and 'Dolphin' both of fifty tons bound for Brazil, hoping to intercept Portuguese treasure ships. His many adventures in South America and Africa are described in 'Southend On Sea and District' by J W Burrows published in 1909 (reprinted 1970) and in Issue 3 of the 'Leighway'. Battell arrived back in Leigh in 1610 accompanied by an African boy, having been the first European to encounter the pigmies of the Congo. Abraham Cocke failed to return, lost at sea.

In 1797 while living near the Wordsworth's in Somerset, Samuel T. Coleridge took opium and fell asleep while reading a passage in 'Purchas his Pilgrimes' relating to a traveller who had visited the Mongolian Khan, Kubla, who was building a palace.



Coleridge claimed, on waking, that in his dream he had composed a long poem on the subject and set about writing it down. He reached line 54 when a person from Porlock came and interrupted the poet and the rest of the dream poem had gone beyond recall.

The opening lines are as follows

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

I can't help wondering what Coleridge would have produced if he had fallen asleep while reading about Battell?

In Leigh-on-Sea did old Battell
A stately pirate trip decree

Doesn't quite do it.

Ed Simpson May 2013

ITS AMAZING WHAT YOU FIND ON EBAY

Always looking for anything to do with Leigh a recent purchase on Ebay produced an interesting find. It was a letter posted at Southend on 21 February 1938 addressed to G. Emery at The Bernhard Baron Jewish Settlement, Berners Street, Stepney London E1. I was intrigued especially as the letter's content was somewhat mysterious.

'Dear (looks like son)

Thanks for your very interesting and illuminating information – be careful my son!

I expected to hear from you during your proposed visit this week end – what about it you old....?

I'm going home next week end so can't see you then unless its on the way.

The week after I should like to go down for ?

Had plenty of sun at the beginning of the week which contributed towards enjoyable experience – myself and another member of the staff had a snow fight with 80 kids (40 a side) instead of 'games' – good sport too - bit ? at times though., for example I got chased into school once with a dozen kids on my heels giving me hell – luckily the old man wasn't around – schoolmasters hey! – t'were good though.

Having lots of good walks but don't suppose I shall be able to afford it - maybe you could come up then – anyway let me know you're ?] as soon as possible.

Just been interrupted. Toby and Robbie have just brought in two women, bloody great Alsatian dog and an Austin Seven which Toby has just bought for £20. By the way Robbie's old war horse packed up earlier in the week and he sold her for 47/-!!

These days – sometimes alone, sometimes with Toby – occasionally (very) Robbie as well, am discovering Essex so to speak – found some good parts too!

Yesterday I found myself alone in a wild and somewhat desolate spot at sundown – walked home across marshes – ground! I'm offering no news you notice – though there's plenty to write about – no inclination I'm afraid. In closing may I press for speedy information re your future activities.

All the best George.'

The writer's address was 'a Ronnette' Cottesmore Gardens.

What intrigued me was what was G doing at a Jewish Settlement in London (a teacher I suspect) and why did he need to be careful? Does anyone know? The following information comes from www.jewisheastend.com

Sometimes neglected in the history of the Jewish East End of London is the remarkable story of the St Georges' Settlement Synagogue. In 1914 Basil Henriques founded a boys' club in 125 Cannon Street Road dedicated to improving the lot of young Jews in the East End. Rose Loewe founded a similar girls club in 1915. In 1917 they married.

In 1919 Rose and Basil Henriques founded the St Georges Settlement Synagogue in a disused hostel at 26a Betts Street. Their motivation was to Anglicise the children of East European immigrants and keep them out of mischief. Their dedication was such that they lived on the premises and ran their pioneering club from there. Club members affectionately knew them by the sobriquets of 'The Gaffer' and 'The Missus'. In 1929 they moved to a former school in Berners Street off Commercial Road. Berners Street has been renamed Henriques Street in honour of Basil & Rose Henriques. The premises were called the Bernard Baron Settlement after Bernard Baron (major shareholder in Gallagher's tobacco Co) who donated £65,000 for the building's purchase. The Berner Street building had 125 rooms equipped for welfare work and recreation. All sorts of games, skills and arts and crafts were available to Jewish East End boys and girls. Basil and Rose Henriques continued to dedicate their lives to the Settlement and other

philanthropic work within the Jewish Community and in the wider world, with particular concentration on the rehabilitation of young offenders.

DANGEROUS SPEEDING OF FISH VANS

The following report appeared in the Chelmsford Chronicle on 8 October 1915 but reported on an incident in July 1831. We are indebted to Fred Feather of the Essex Family History Society for this snippet.

'In the night of Sunday last, as James Cook, fisherman and landlord of the Cock and Billet (the present day Crooked Billet?) at Leigh, (late of the White Horse at Widford), was driving his fish machine to London, his horse took fright at a cow that was lying in the road and started off at a rapid rate. On reaching the bridge between Hutton and Shenfield the machine overturned; Cook fell on his head, with the van and one of the passengers named Wood upon him. Nearly an hour elapsed before Cook could be extricated from this situation, he was found with his neck dislocated and quite dead. Wood received considerable injury; his forehead and face being much cut. The deceased has left a widow and five children. There were several other persons in the machine who escaped unhurt.'

On 5 August 1831 the paper reported that 'fearful rate at which the fish vans travel along the public high roads is not only unnecessary but dangerous. Cook and three others were thrown out with great violence...the proprietor was killed on the spot, his companions were very seriously injured.'

From the records of licensees of the Crooked Billet we see in 1832-3 Jane Cook held the licence – presumably James' wife. The Parish register shows that James was buried at St Clements on 7 August 1831 and he was 34 years of age.

Jane Cook obviously made every effort to keep the pub. By 1835 she had remarried to Henry Frost, 10 years her junior, who was the landlord of the Billet until at least 1845, although Jane had died in 1843 and is buried at St Clement's.

WE'RE AN INVENTIVE LOT IN LEIGH



So Leigh invented the freezer bag

CROESO TO DELWYN

A big welcome to Delwyn Whent, one of our newest members. Delwyn was born in 1920, in Blaenavon, a mining town in the Welsh hills that is now a World Heritage Site. He left his home town in September 1939 to attend the University of Birmingham and study Civil Engineering just as we were declaring war on Germany. Two years later he enlisted in the Royal Air Force and in February 1943, he sailed in a convoy to Egypt via the Cape of Good Hope -the Mediterranean was still in the hands of the Germans – and took part in Operation Husky, the allied invasion of Sicily.

Six days after Victory in Europe he was sent to Palestine where he saw an even more gruesome side to war: 'It was,' he says 'the worst of times and also the best because you didn't know who the enemy was. Yet I found a camaraderie I'd never felt before or after.'

When he returned home in June 1946 to complete his degree, university life no longer held any charms for him so he came to Southend Technical College and studied to become a quantity surveyor. In a series of curious parallels with my own family - my father was also in the RAF and attended Southend Tec - Delwyn met his wife, Jean Emery, at the Kursaal Ballroom (my parents had met there six months earlier) and married in October 1948 at the Wesleyan Church in Elm Road (the very same place my parents married a few months later).

Later, Delwyn joined the Ministry of Works and went to Aden in 1964 with his wife before returning to the UK to live a happily married life in Portsmouth, Reading and Newmarket. When Jean passed away, he came to Leigh to be close to his daughter. He joined our Society last September.

92 years young, Delwyn has volunteered to be one of our stewards down at the Heritage Centre. He showed no signs of flagging as we walked up the steps of Church Hill. 'So what's your secret? I asked breathlessly. 'It runs through the family,' he said without hesitation. 'My mother and father both lived well into their eighties and my sister, who is 96, is as fit as a flea.' 'So it's hereditary?' I enquired. 'Not really. It's the Welsh hills, see? Walking up and down in the wind and rain would make anyone fit.' Clive Webster

SUBS

Sorry folks its coming up to that time again. Subscriptions will remain at be £10 per household from January. Please get your subs in promptly as it helps us immensely. For those who want to pay by standing order you will find enclosed a form for completion. There are very clear instructions on the form as to who gets what so please make sure you read it carefully. It would be helpful if you could do this before the new year. As always thank you for your support.

AND FINALLY

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