



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

## SUMMER 2025

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

There are still some outstanding subscriptions for 2025. Given our costs we are sorry to say that if these don't come in by 31 August this will be your last Leighway. Your £12 subs make a great difference to the work of LCAH and the Heritage Centre in preserving Leigh's history for future generations.

# LEIGHWAY 76

## LEIGH

# CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE

### SAD NEWS

Welcome to the latest edition of Leighway with apologies for delay since last one—life is hectic. But this is a bumper edition.

I am so sorry to start off on a very sad note. One of our Trustees, Andy Omand, has passed away unexpectedly. Andy had only been with us a short while but made a great impact.

After losing Dec we were worried about getting anyone to deal with such things as maintenance and our various contracts with providers. Andy stepped up to the role and additionally took on the minute taker position for our meetings. He was instrumental in getting out new CCTV, stair lift and photo digitisation in place and we will miss his expertise and his cheery face and humour at our meetings and in the centre.

Our sincere condolences go to his wife and family.

We also send out condolences to Mrs J Wellstead on the loss of her husband—both have been long time members and supporters.

### CITY DAY



Carole manning our stand at the first City Day.

## **SOUTHEND AND CASTLE POINT LOCAL PLANS**

The next iteration of the Southend Local Plan will soon be out on consultation. This is the precursor to sending the plan up to the Ministry for an Examination in Public to take place. This plan will shape the future of the City for many years to come and is going to be controversial given the Government's housing policy. But it is not just about housing.

The document will go through the whole range of planning policies and allocations. It is a long document and can be tedious but if we care about our City, and Leigh in particular, we need to review it and send in any observations. Local people often know things the planners cannot be aware of and this all adds to the feedback.

Castle Point Borough Council have now published their latest iteration of their Local Plan, pleasingly it does not include the sites of greatest concern to us in Leigh although it does include 516 new builds in Hadleigh (mostly around the town centre).

This may sound like good news but Castle Point have put a plan together for well under half of the Government's target figure. So it is too soon to start cheering. The Plan may be found wanting by the Government and it could be batted back to Castle Point to look at more sites with the knowledge of the Salvation Army land in the background.

### **A GREAT SERVANT TO THE THAMES AND THE ENVIRONMENT AWARD TO MEMBER, CLIVE WEBSTER**

The River Thames Society has an annual award known as the Durant Cup given to a member who has made a significant contribution to the life and well-being of the Thames.

The Cup for 2024 was awarded to Leigh resident Clive Webster who has organised litter-picking events for the last ten years along a 35-mile stretch of Thames foreshore, from Rainham to Shoeburyness.

Clive led teams of volunteers, with the co-operation of local councils and other groups, who since 2015 have filled a staggering 20,244 sacks of rubbish, the equivalent of removing 1,012,202 litter items from the coastal environment.. Clive is now retiring from this leadership role and the award ceremony, held in The Mayflower, Old Leigh on 13th May was a fitting tribute for all his hard work, regretfully still necessary but continuing in the hands of other volunteers.



Clive was also for many years a steward at the Heritage Centre. We wish him well in his retirement.

**LOOKING AFTER OUR ENVIRONMENT**

**A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT AND  
DEDICATION FROM A VERY GENTLE AND  
UNASSUMING FRIEND OF LEIGH**

## LOUIS BURLEIGH BRUHL

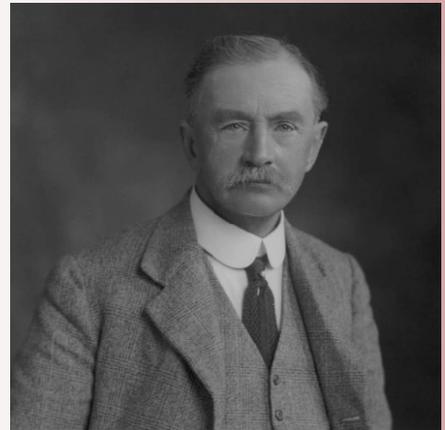
My thanks to member, Fred Feather, who reminded me of this artist who painted quite a few pictures of Leigh. I have seen them in the past reproduced in magazines of the Edwardian period. This one is called 'Leigh Creek 1909'



**Louis Burleigh Bruhl** (1861 – 1942) was an English landscape artist, born in Baghdad, Ottoman Empire. He was educated in Vienna and England, and studied medicine at the London Hospital.

He was President of the Dudley Gallery Art Society. and a member of the New Society of Artists; he was also president of the Watercolour Society.

In 1915 he published *Essex water-colours* which contained a selection of his Essex scenes, several of Leigh. His work also included publicity posters for the Great Western Railway.



Louis Burleigh Bruhl  
With acknowledgement to the  
National Portrait Gallery

I found out more about him from the Romford Recorder -

Louis' father, the Rev John Henry Brühl was born in Prussia around 1824 - originally of the Jewish faith, he later converted to Christianity and became one of three missionaries working on behalf of the Church of England in Baghdad, for the Operative Jewish Converts Institution ,during the late 1850s.

After leaving school at 16 Louis became a merchants' bookkeeper and later a director of White, Child and Beney Ltd. In 1889 he made two major changes to his life. He married Alice With in Hampstead and changed his career to become a painter and started to exhibit his work in England. At this time the couple were living in Hornchurch.

He also had an interest in amateur dramatics and in 1897 wrote a widely acclaimed farce entitled *The China Dish*, which was first performed to a large audience at the Corn Exchange in Romford.

He collaborated with A R Hope Moncrieff in the spring of 1909, providing 32 illustrations for their book *Essex*. In 1912 he became president of the Constable Art Club.

Three of his paintings were in possession of the Royal family, one having been commissioned for the wedding of the Queen.

His wife died at Watford, to where they had moved, in 1936, aged 75 and by 1939 he was living with a paid house-keeper, Carmen Silva Peyton-Brühl, the wife of his nephew, Horace . On March 11, 1940 he married a former pupil, Maud May. He died in 1942 aged 80.

## The Bees & the Birds

and,

and,

and.



Female Hairy-footed Flower bee

After a seemingly endless, grey winter, Spring has definitely sprung, & it's not just the Peterboat that will be rejoicing (though I confess that I shall be avoiding the Old Town on sunny weekends!). But I've enjoyed watching our local wildlife in the port (sometimes on the quay!) & on Two Tree Island. For waders, shellfish scraps are a welcome source of food & I've seen several Turnstone & Sanderling foraging around the back of the Cockle Sheds; certainly eases the life of a wannabe wildlife photographer & I hope the upcoming port improvements don't restrict access.



Ambitious Sanderling



Shelduck

One of our larger ducks (and easy to misspell), a few Shelduck should be around through the summer. They are a magnificent sight. Seems that Mute Swan, Common Tern & Oystercatcher may again be nesting (I watched a pair of the latter fight-off a marauding Crow). Let's hope they are successful & also that Avocet have another good breeding year. Definitely worth visiting through the summer. You never quite know what you may see (and hear).

I'm already chasing butterflies & it seems this year has started better than last (which was an awful year for most species). It's wonderful to watch Speckled Wood, Peacock, Comma & Orange Tip males patrolling their territories. Early specimens have over-wintered – it is quite amazing how they can fly with such worn/damaged wings. Just seen my first Small Heath too – on the field west of the Leigh station



Speckled Wood



Small Heath

Great Wood (Belfairs NR) & Pound Wood will be places to see, from mid-late-June hopefully, resurgent numbers of Heath Fritillary butterflies, our local conservation success.. **But the sites are fragile so please keep to the paths.** Around this time you may also see White Admirals & even Purple Emperors. Both are rare species, with sightings & photographs much sought after by butterfly enthusiasts. The latter tend to live high in the tree canopy but may be lured to ground by tinned sardines, I have heard.

And now to bees. UK has around 275 species -- 24 types of bumble bee, 250 species of solitary bee & just one honey bee species (a sophisticated & intelligent creature which has been developed & exploited by humans for millennia).

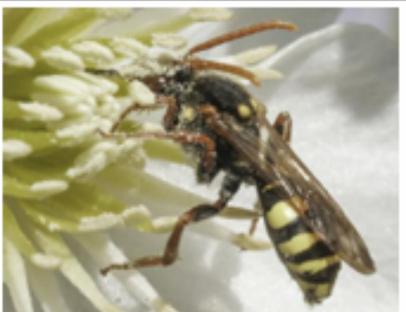
Solitary bees are loners! They do not form colonies of workers under a single queen (like bumble & honey bees) but each individual female must build (or find) her own nest (often a burrow in the ground), & construct small cells within which she lays a single egg (typically one a day for a week or four), which will eventually develop into an adult bee.



(Not so) Common Mourning bee

She must provision each closed cell with enough pollen to support the growing larva or her youngster will die. Erica McAlister (Broadcaster & Curator of Flies at Natural History Museum), says that bee-larvae are pampered as they have all their food already to-hand, while baby flies (maggots) have to go out into a dangerous world to hunt for theirs!

Solitary bees are with us from March through October. The first is almost certainly the Hairy-footed Flower bee, which you will probably have seen (and heard!) in your garden. The last is the Ivy Mining bee, which exploits its late-flowering namesake.



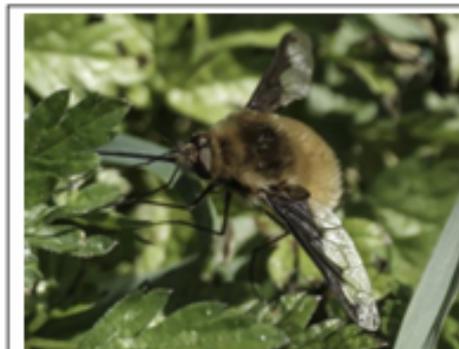
Goodens Nomad bee

But evolution has played a few tricks on bees. Other creatures are always looking to exploit their hard work. Several species of bee, for instance, are 'cuckoos'. Just like the bird, these infiltrate a host nest cell & lay their egg inside. The intruder larva will hatch first & eat the food store (& sometimes the host larva too); either way, the host dies. The picture above right shows a cuckoo that exploits our hairy-footed friends, while the one above is a common 'cuckoo' or 'nomad' bee which preys on mining bees. Did you think it was a wasp? Another evolutionary trick. I blame Darwin!



Four-banded Flower bee

**One good place to look (for bees and butterflies et al) is the Sensory Garden behind the Leigh Library & St Clement's re-wilded churchyard, where Peter Monk provides a splendid environment. Four-banded Flower bees can be seen in June.**



Dark-edged bee-fly

**PS** I suspect many of you have noticed a small, round, brown fuzzy insect with a long proboscis hovering in your gardens. It's a Dark-edged bee-fly & they are having a very good year! It's a fly which preys upon mining bees, in the same way as a cuckoo bee (so Dr McAlister, this fly, at least, has an easy start in life!).

The world of wild bees, as with other classes of insect, is seemingly endless. I urge you all NOT to get too interested (but if you are, please don't hesitate to contact me).

**Rijel**

## CHALKWELL STATION RAMP

Many of you will be aware of the recent controversy regarding the removal of the ramp at Chalkwell Station and its replacement. Carole and many residents attended a meeting recently where the whole situation was explained by council officers and the Leader of the Council, Daniel Cowan. Many questions were raised and answered.

The ramp had to be removed but the complication was that although the ramp was the Council's property the land on which it sat is Network Rail's and the Council would have to get a Possession Order to allow them to do the work. This takes a very long time as it affects the rail network and there is of course a knock on effect on rail services.

However, there is work being done at the Station later this year for which a Possession Order is in place and agreement has been reached so that the Council can 'piggy back' on that Order to get the work done at the same time and get a temporary replacement facility in place.

So there is going to be a little longer inconvenience but the works will be done. The new facility will be off Network Rail land so this sort of issue doesn't arise in the future.

As part of the Council's presentation they put together a very interesting history of the Chalkwell Ramp and thanks to Councillor Cowan we are able to reproduce some of that here for members' interest.



The ramp was built in 1910 using an early form of reinforced concrete and has far-exceeded its design life.

Obviously there are far more rigid requirements nowadays in terms of materials and methods, so the ramp has been amazing really.

The London Tilbury and Southend Railway constructed the first railway to Southend, which reached Southend Central in 1856, running along the coast from Leigh to the outskirts of what is now Chalkwell, before it continued slightly further inland to the terminus.

This as can be expected meant crossing a number of obstructions,.

At the area where the ramp stands was a footpath which led from inland to the beach area and a foot level crossing was installed.

As Southend expanded in the later 19th century and Chalkwell developed, it is assumed there was demand for a safer crossing and in 1912 an agreement was made between the railway company and the council for the construction of a new bridge with associated approach ramps. This led to what was known as the Woodfield Bridge being constructed. This was a new structure across the railway with a northern approach ramp leading down from the ramp to Chalkwell Beach. The original bridge deck structure has been replaced by the current deck but the northern and southern ramps are original although modified.

Drawings dating back to 1910 show that the structure was constructed using the Kahn system of reinforced concrete produce by The Trussed Concrete Steel Company Ltd. This system was developed by Julius Kahn in the early 20th century when development of reinforced concrete systems was rapid. Although similar to today's type of structure other general characteristics are far inferior to today's standards. The structure was erected on shallow pad foundations.

The construction of Chalkwell station with its own footbridge occurred in 1933 (coincidental with the new Leigh Station) .

Julius Kahn, who filed a patent for the system in 1902, was the brother of the more well-known Albert Kahn, a nationally prominent architect based in Detroit , best known for the factories he designed for automotive companies such as Packard and Ford in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Albert incorporated his brother's patented reinforcement into many of the buildings he designed. Meanwhile, Julius formed the Trussed Concrete Steel Company, also based in Detroit, to manufacture, market, and provide structural engineering services for his proprietary system.

## FORTHCOMING SPEAKERS

**17 September**—Animal Heroes of WW1 and WW2— our friends from Purfleet join us again to tell us many stories about the part animals played in the wars of the 20th Century.—Paul Hounsell, Purfleet Heritage and Military Centre

**22 October**—“*I Don't Want to Swim in Sewage*” - Penny Allard is the founder of Wild Bookkeeping Ltd, a multi-award-winning bookkeeping practice that helps small business owners understand their numbers and make confident financial decisions. But Penny is not your typical bookkeeper. She's also a passionate open-water swimmer and a fierce advocate for cleaner rivers, seas and coastlines.



This year, Penny has been recognised as a finalist in the *Accounting Excellence Awards* in the *ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) Excellence* category, for her work combining financial expertise with environmental impact.

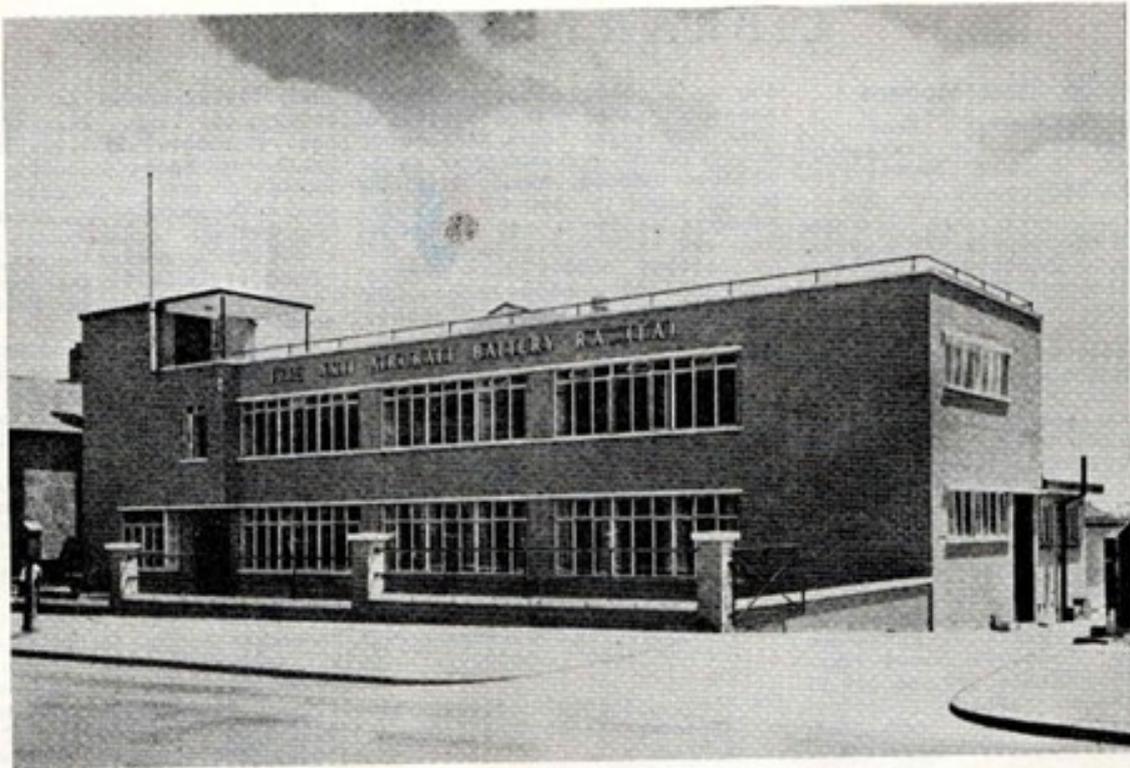
She is a proud member of **WaterWatch UK**, a grassroots group set up to hold water companies to account and empower communities to take action on pollution and water quality. Penny brings financial know-how, local knowledge, and lived experience of what it means to swim in pollut-

ed water.

In her talk, “*I Don't Want to Swim in Sewage*”, she'll be sharing the truth about what's going on in our

## FROM THE PRESS - GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE 1745— FROM FRED FEATHER

On Monday the 22d of July a young Man at Lee in Essex, diverting himself with some Flounders, put one alive into his Mouth, which slipt down his Throat, and tho' all Endeavours were used to force it up again, he died soon after.



## ANTI-AIRCRAFT HEADQUARTERS, EASTWOOD ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA

ARCHITECT: GERALD SHENSTONE, F.R.I.B.A., F.S.I.

● **SITE.**—The site comprises an area of approximately  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres and slopes away from Eastwood Road with a very steep fall immediately next the road.

● **PLAN.**—The building was planned to accommodate one battery of an anti-aircraft brigade comprising 8 officers and 205 men. The accommodation consists of recreation room, sergeants' mess, bar and men's changing room on the first floor. The ground floor comprises officers' mess, battery office, lecture room, officers' lavatory, men's lavatory and ladies' lavatory, drill hall, rifle range, gun and lorry shed, workshop and stores. There is also a P.S.I. house which, owing to the difficulties of drainage, had to be placed at the rear of the site; this comprises

living room, kitchen and three bedrooms, bathroom and w.c. The whole of the buildings are lighted by electricity with gas for cooking purposes.

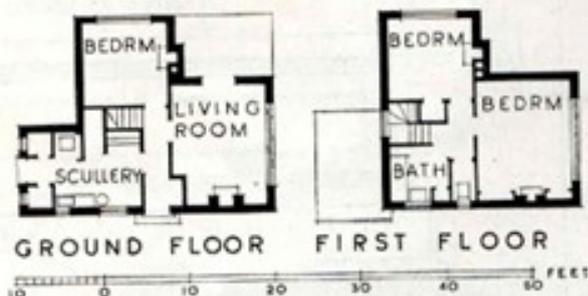
● **CONSTRUCTION.**—The buildings are of solid brick or hollow brick wall construction with hollow tile fire resisting floors to front portion, the roof to front portion being covered with insulating tiles, as it is intended to use this for training purposes. An asphalted wood flat covers the rifle range and stores, and steel trusses covered with corrugated asbestos and patent glazing covers the gun and lorry shed and workshop.

The drill hall roof is covered in asbestos carried in a patent steel truss. This type of construction was incorporated

on the instructions of the War Office owing to the fact that as the new 3.7 gun would be used in training it was essential to have a clear height in the drill hall of 30 ft.; the use of this construction has proved very satisfactory.

The staircase is of precast stone, the windows are standard metal windows, and the cills and copings are artificial stone. The external walls are faced with concrete bricks.

● **INTERNAL FINISHES.**—The main staircase, halls and landings have a 4 ft. 6 in. cullamix dado with plaster over. Lavatories and changing room have a similar dado with white concrete brick facings over. The floors are concrete finished with granolithic.



Left: The Permanent Staff Instructor's house; and, above, the plans

## DO YOU REMEMBER?

The picture and article on Page 10 were recently purchased from Ebay. It is from an architectural journal of 1938 and depicts the Anti Aircraft HQ which had just been built in Eastwood Road. I am told just opposite the Woodcutters.



Gerald ("Dick") Shenstone

The architect, Gerald Shenstone had qualified prior to the Great War. He set up in practice in 1920. He continued as a reservist in the Territorial Army 82nd (Essex) Heavy Anti Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery.

His practice grew steadily between the wars including work for the Territorial and Reserve Forces and

public authorities..

Through another Ebay search I found this colour postcard of the facility.

Gerald Shenstone had been a Brigadier in the 7th Bn Essex Regiment in the Great War. Later as reservist he achieved the rank of Brevet Colonel, and post war became Aide-de-Camp to King George VI, and later the young Queen Elizabeth.

He was a Deputy Lieutenant for the County of Essex from the 1930's onwards and later a Justice of the Peace. His firm, Shenstone and Partners still practices, and I thank them for the information and use of the photograph.



Anti-Aircraft Headquarters, Eastwood

Carole

## MORE WATER WITH YOUR GUINNESS, SIR?



This rather important looking gentleman is Rupert Guinness, 2nd Earl of Iveagh. The Guinness family were of course brewers in Dublin. Educated at Eton and Cambridge he served in the Second Boer War and became MP for Haggerston in 1908 but lost the seat and between 1912 and 1927 was MP for Southend. In that year he succeeded to the title of 2nd Earl of Iveagh and resigned as MP with his wife Lady Gwendoline winning the Southend seat which she held until 1935 when her son in law, Henry 'Chips' Channon, the famous diarist, took over, followed in 1950 by his son, Paul Channon.

At University Rupert Guinness had been a keen rower but due to a weak heart missed out in being in the Cambridge Eight. However he did well in competition and became president of the Thames Rowing Club in 1912 until his death in 1967.

I wonder if, when he was MP for Southend he had long conversations with Dr Watson of Leigh who was descended from both the Jacobs Cream Cracker and Bewleys Coffee business empires also of Dublin.

## A SMUGGLING TALE

Edward Newton Walter was appointed Rector at St Clement's Church in 1808. He brought with him, his wife and his 12-year-old son George.

George grew up and, eventually left home to become a marine officer. He married in 1824 and he and his wife had a son. Both the wife and the son were sickly, and George resigned his commission in 1828, I think, to care for them. Sadly, both wife and son died in 1829.

George was now in his early thirties with time on his hands and, on involving himself in the local community, realised how badly run was the smuggling in Leigh. He set about reorganising it on military lines.

His mother was appalled to think that the Rector's son should be involved with the smugglers and threw his powder flask on the fire. It went off with a bang and blew off her hand.

So George went over to Belgium where he had an artificial hand made for her. He also bought Belgian lace mittens to hide the prosthesis and smuggled them back into Leigh.

Bernard Hetherington

Notes:

Rector Edward Newton Walter, never mind the exploits of his son, deserves a closer look for Leigh people.

From Benton's History of the Rochford Hundred.

He was born in 1763 in Woking, into a clergyman's family. He was the son of Rev Alleyne Walter DD. For many generations the family had been amongst the most influential residents of Barbados and had family connections to the Governor of the island.

Edward married Mary Axe of Somerset. Benton reports that *'his failings as a parish priest had probably something to do with the times in which he lived and towards the close of his life he was incapable of the fatigue of toiling up the steep paths with which Leigh abounds, having difficulty of walking except upon level ground. Although one of the old school he was to a certain extent in advance of the times, establishing two services on Sunday, and was a magnificent reader, a good preacher and a polished gentleman.'*

According to Benton he had 4 sons and 2 daughters, George being the second son.

Edward first became a curate in Somerset but in 1808 was appointed the Rector of St Clement's where he established 2 services on Sundays and stayed in Leigh until his death in 1837. he was buried in Lewisham.

There is a footnote to Benton's record as follows—*Mrs Walter met with a sad accident at Leigh. Whilst incautiously throwing gunpowder into the fire, the contents exploded and shattered her right hand. She used one of cork after this, which was so ingeniously contrived, that she was enabled to use not only a fork and spoon, but was accustomed to do needlework likewise.*

Carole

## PURFLEET HERITAGE AND MILITARY CENTRE

Earlier in the year we were treated to a very interesting evening of delving into the history of gunpowder and the Purfleet Royal Gunpowder Magazine. Paul Hounsell and colleagues will be joining us again in September to talk about Animal Heroes of World War 1 and World War 2.

The museum at Purfleet is truly unique and they provide a warm welcome, tour and refreshments, so we thought members might like to pay a visit in the Autumn.

First of all we want to gauge interest to ensure it is viable before we book anything. Its not too far a trip to Purfleet and with opening times of 10 til 3 the darker evenings will not be a problem. The Museum is open Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. The fee is £5. The cost of transport will be additional.

Apart from the Magazine building there are military displays, history of Purfleet and a Gurkha Museum. And memorials. It also has a gift shop and tea bar.

The staff offer guided tours which include a beverage and biscuits and a 60 to 90 minute guided tour of the exhibits by experts and an exploration of the outside of the Magazine. Minimum group size is 10. (Price to be checked)

A flyer for the museum is included with this Leighway.

If you would like to take part in a visit please email ANN PRICE at [bprice@sky.com](mailto:bprice@sky.com) (b 15 August) and we will try and arrange this.

## A NEW DONATION TO THE HERITAGE CENTRE

A charming little autograph book donated by Cathy Lisles which contains some lovely sketches by her grandfather, Cecil Kidd, who lived in Edinburgh Avenue, Leigh from the late 20s to the 70s. He loved Old Leigh and its characters and this comes out in the sketches. According to the book the sketches were done in 1934.



### LEIGH LIVES

For all who love the history  
of Leigh and its people

[www.leighlives.co.uk](http://www.leighlives.co.uk)  
[leighlives@btinternet.com](mailto:leighlives@btinternet.com)

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# THE LIBRARY GARDENS MOSAIC PROJECT

The Library Gardens Mosaic is progressing nicely, these are some of the elements that have been completed. The work is done away from the site with the tesserae placed upside down on special paper. This can be dissolved when placed on the site and the gaps filled with special grout just as in kitchen and bathroom tiling. So the images you see are of the backs hence the spelling looks wrong. Hopefully it will be installed in the gardens sometime during August for all to see and identify the elements that local children thought epitomised Leigh.



## Background

In 2022 Friends of Leigh Library Gardens (FOLLG) decided the beds at the front of the library needed a revamp, so they talked to the Parks Dept who



agreed they could clear most of the shrubs in the west bed and create a new planting plan. This also coincided with reports of ASB in the area to the west behind the railings. By removing the shrubs there was a clear view from Broadway West through to the estuary view and to date this has largely cured the ASB. FOLLG also used money raised by Leigh Constitutional Club to replace the very tatty chain link fence with lovely new railings and work commenced with the new planting in 2023.

The clearance exposed a large area of unsightly concrete too deep to break out with the limited resources and after some debate a mosaic was suggested and the idea grew into a Leigh themed mosaic with a competition for local children. Chair of FOLLG, Valerie Morgan knew a local company, The Mosaic Studio, had created mosaics around the city and elsewhere and contacted them and they explained how they had worked with children on similar projects very much involving the children throughout.

The competition asked for drawings based on the child's concept of "Leigh". There were beautiful submissions from children of all ages. A meeting was held with the Mosaic Studio, the Arts Group of Leigh Town Council and some of the Friends to view the drawings and the suggestion was to design a compilation mosaic incorporating as many themes from the drawings as possible so no one was left out. This was subsequently commissioned by Southend City Council. Workshops were then to be held to teach the children about mosaics before actually starting work at the library where again the children would be involved in the placing of the tessera.

Of course all this costs money and some funding was promised by Leigh Town Council from the Community Infrastructure Levy funds it holds which we could then have been match funded from grants. Initially, after agreeing to part fund LTC rescinded the offer but with changes in the complement of the Council they were eventually persuaded to reinstate it.