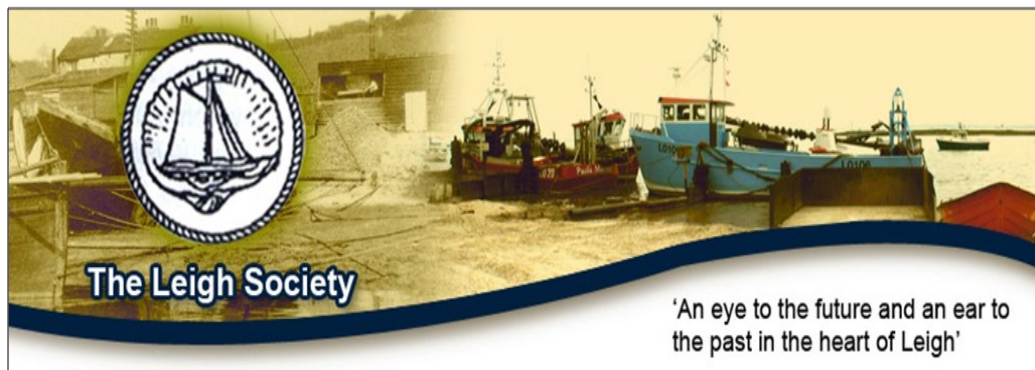


LEIGHWAY

ISSUE 50

AUTUMN

2016



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DIARY DATES

18 September—Regatta

24 September—Book Fair
Leigh Community Centre

19 October—Harwich and
Dovercourt Holiday
Resorts—David Whittle

23 October—Wilton
Lunch—see flyer enclosed

16 November—Dorset
Holiday—Ivan Starkey,
Leigh Horticultural Society

25 November — Leigh
Lights

10 December—Carols on
Strand Wharf

OPEN DAY

The Open Day in July was another success for the Society, even if it was not quite as busy as usual. It was a very hot day and many deserted the Town for the beach and there were several other events going on. However, all who came said they enjoyed the talks and the exhibitions and our thanks go to all who took part.

Since the Open Day the Heritage Centre stall has had very successful days at the Hadleigh History Fair and Leigh Maritime Festival, when the Centre itself was very busy. We are now looking forward to Regatta weekend.

These special days are a highlight of the year for us in that they allow us to showcase the Society and the Centre to local people and visitors and it is great to take part in the community activities.

Our thinking is that next year's open day will probably be in the autumn to avoid the summer season and the theme will be education in Leigh—please let us have your memories of 'learning in Leigh', especially if you attended one of the smaller private schools which populated the town at one time.



THE GRAND—A NEW ERA?

Everyone in Leigh has been frustrated over the last few years over the lack of progress in restoration of the Grand. The most imposing building in the centre of Leigh.

Having received planning permission sometime ago for restoration to a hotel etc, the new application proposes conversion to 19 flats, including a penthouse, spa and wine bar in the basement and restaurant at ground floor. This includes a four storey extension at the rear.

The period for commenting on the application has now closed and it will now be for the Borough Council to consider all of the information and comments submitted before they reach their decision.

It is a major proposal and all of us are looking closely at what happens next.

JUST A DRUM WITH STRINGS? NORMAN GREENOP—BANJO MAN

On 27 December 1930 Norman Greenop passed away suddenly at his home in Leigh Road, after years of heart problems. He was 61 and had been a businessman in Leigh for 14 years. His problem heart hadn't stopped him playing a big part in local life because earlier that evening he had led the orchestra at the Leigh Sailing Club's dance in St Clement's Hall.

His greatest claim to fame went well beyond the confines of this small town. For over 40 years his life had revolved around music and, in particular, the banjo.

He played the banjo with the Moore & Burgess Minstrels and The Stavordales but was more widely known for his long partnership with Arthur Stanley Sr. The team of Stanley & Greenop toured every Music Hall in the United Kingdom from 1903 more than once and even did a tour of South Africa. The partnership broke up just prior to the outbreak of the Great War.

At the turn of the century, Norton Greenop designed and sold the first banjos to bear his name as maker. They included several unusual features and were a cross between a banjo and a zither banjo with a lot of metal in the hoop. The tone was inclined to be metallic.

In 1926 John Alvey Turner Ltd. were agents for Greenop's "Tonetube" banjos (which Norton patented), plectrum banjos and tenor banjos. At this time Norton was carrying on a music business at Leigh and conducting his own dance band, the Beachcombers' Dance Band.

Norton was also the composer of over 200 pieces of music for the banjo, mandolin and guitar and his wife was a local business person with a fashion shop in Westcliff. He died on December 27th, 1930.



KARNO'S ARMY RIDES AGAIN

A recent visitor to the Heritage Centre was the great granddaughter of Fred Karno the famous showman.

Many moons ago in Leighway we carried the story of Fred's son, Leslie, (pictured) who lived with his mother Edith in Leigh somewhere. Well it turns out that they lived in Oakleigh Park Drive under their real surname

of Westcott.

LEIGH—A SPORTSMAN'S HAVEN

It is well known that some of our greatest sports personalities over the years have come to Leigh to train or play. Bombardier Billy Wells, the great boxer of the earlier 20th century trained at the Grand and the Elms.

Turning to a less strenuous sport, billiards, (and snooker), the Grand played host also in those years to Tom Newman, who was at the time regarded as the coming billiards champion of England. Tom also played a match at the Ship which according to the local paper aroused much interest. Newman was 19 at the time and his opponent was Charles Roberts who later became a



Tom Newman playing at the Grand

billiards tutor in the local area. I don't for one minute profess to understand the scoring in billiards but Newman won 750 :654.

Tom Newman (1894 – 1943) was born **Thomas Pratt** but always appeared under the name Newman when playing.

He established himself as the best billiards player of the 1920s, appearing in every World Professional Billiards Championship final between 1921 and 1930, and winning the title six times. In the last five of these finals he met Joe Davis.

He regarded snooker as the less "serious" of the two sports, but nevertheless in 1934 he was one of two entries for the World Championship, the other being defending champion Joe Davis. Davis won .

ARCADIAN LANDSCAPES

If anyone was to handpick their top ten sites of London, then Hampton Court and Kew Gardens would surely feature. Throw in a dash of Richmond Park, add a touch of Teddington Lock, season with Ham House and adorn with Eel Pie Island and you have a culinary delight to savour the most jaded of palates. If I was to say that you can visit all these in a morning and arrive and leave courtesy of a meandering strip of attractive riverside views that shimmer like a jewel through an area referred to as Arcadia, you will appreciate the richness of this walk.

This is the Thames Path and throughout this stage, the route is flat, easy to follow and pleasingly firm underfoot. It consists mainly of towpaths and gravel tracks so hiking boots aren't really necessary. And like a box of assorted chocolates, each delight is laid out in front of you. Hampton Court is reflected in the cool running waters, its buildings and ornate formal gardens mirrored like a giant reflecting pool.

Richmond Park sweeps alongside the river in a grand tree-lined arc and meets up with Kew Gardens with its magnificent Victorian glass buildings gleaming in the sunshine. Even Teddington Lock with its lock and weir system has an air of middle-class whimsy with its window boxes and mown lawns. Eel Pie Island, still remains a bohemian Shangri la for artists and celebrities alike.

The route starts off in fine style, as it skirts around the perimeter of Wolsey's opulent Hampton Court. The path then broadens into a tree-lined route and turns northwards. This section is popular with cyclists, joggers and also flocks of green parakeets, descendants of escapees who found the leafy suburbs of riverside London to their liking. Coming up to Kingston-upon-Thames, the river becomes predominantly a rich man's playground; the east bank lined with million pound bungalows with their boat houses containing the obligatory cruiser or motor launch. On the river itself, grebes bob and dive for cover as rowers come steaming past, grunting and groaning while their coaches, in small motorboats, use hailers to exhort them to even greater efforts.

The Path continues on this busy theme to Kingston Bridge. Here, it's best to cross the bridge and get on the other side of the river because as the river snakes easterly this section of Path follows more closely its contours and offers better views. Once over the bridge, the Path skirts the town centre and turns into Canbury Gardens which leads into Lower Ham Road. Before long you arrive at Teddington Lock. Here the lock gates hold up to 1.75 million gallons of water and it is at this point that the Thames becomes tidal. From here the Environment Agency hands over the stewardship to the Thames River Authority, which takes charge of the river all the way down to the Crowstone at Westcliff at which point it becomes sea.

Leaving the lock, the Path follows a green corridor of nature reserves, woodland and parks with glimpses of Eel Pie Island on the other bank and Richmond Hill looming in the distance. From here the river weaves a continuous thread between Twickenham and Richmond, gently sweeping through an area known as Arcadia. It is here that many important artists and writers came to visit. Writers like Pope and Defoe and painters like Turner were inspired by the pastoral landscape, romantic notions of inner harmony and on a more prosaic level, the hope of a healthy, disease-free life.

The Path then heads along the edge of Richmond Park with the Duke of Northumberland's estate on the opposite side and fleeting glimpses of the conservatory in Kew Gardens, the blissful calm only broken by the continuous roar of planes coming into land at Heathrow. Once at Kew Bridge head for the Green and a welcome pint before continuing southwards to the nearest tube.

This part of the Thames Path is 11½ miles long. To get there take the Fenchurch Street line and join the underground at Tower Hill. Get off at Waterloo and take the over rail to Hampton Court. Walk the short distance to the bridge and Hampton Court is on your left. On the way back, take the district underground from Kew Gardens all the way to Tower Hill.

Clive Webster

You can download the Thames Path National Trail guide at
http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/sites/default/files/thames_path_leaflet_0.pdf

SEAL OF APPROVAL

Southend's worst-kept secret is probably the seals. They've been with us for several years and seem to attract a fair share of attention.

Recently a paddle boarder went close up to the creatures and took some snaps. Cue local press coverage. Seals in Southend - how remarkable!

But it was as long ago as 2008 that Paul Gilson, local fisherman and Leigh Society member, recounted how he hand fed them from his boat. Then it was grey seals. Now it is common seals, also known as harbour seals, but a seal is a seal, right?

Yet should we be surprised because the Thames is cleaner than it has ever been - too clean some claim - and provides easy pickings as the seals intercept the fish swimming on the incoming tide, right up to Tilbury. Their diet consists of herrings, sole and dabs, but they will happily munch on a crab or two.

So we went out to see them. Under an eggshell blue sky we headed out at low tide along the causeway at Westcliff. Someone decided to go native, well, barefoot anyway, but that wasn't a particularly good idea with a route strewn with discarded oyster and mussel shells - it can make a terrible mess of someone's feet.

As the sky opened up they came into view; hazy mystical images floating on the horizon but then seals have been part of maritime folklore for centuries. As we got to the water's edge we could discern distinct shapes on the sandbank; large, torpedo-like bulk with flippers hanging limply by their sides like leeboards.

The grey seal is significantly larger than the common seal but it isn't easy to tell them apart with standard issue binoculars, particularly from a distance of a hundred yards when looking into the glinting sun. Moreover, a common bull seal will be larger than a grey cow seal and it becomes even more complicated when pups are involved. Too complicated in fact when one has left the hectic clamour of the beaches far behind and entered the realm of a watery kingdom.

In this timeless landscape, it was only the shifting tide that indicated we had spent nearly one hour gazing at these creatures and when one bobbed up just a few yards away we knew it was telling us that it was time to head back.

You don't have to get your feet wet to see them. Discovery Charters run seal trips daily throughout September leaving from Wallasea Island.

Clive Webster



Statistics

Length: 1.2-1.6m Weight: 45-105kg Average Lifespan: 20-30 years

The Common or Harbour Seal is Protected in Britain under the Conservation of Seals Act 1970, and classified as a Priority Species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Picture courtesy of the Wildlife Trusts

A GENEALOGIST'S DILEMMA AN OSBORNE MYSTERY

Can any member of the Osborne family help with this query?

In 1882 William John (Dosh) Osborne married Mary Amelia Osborne. They were to become landlords of the Crooked Billet. Amelia died in 1912 and 2 years later William remarried as the records show to Frances Turnnidge. However local newspapers carry this entry for January 1914

Hearty congratulations to Mr. "Dosh" Osborne the genial host of the "Crooked Billet," who was married on Tuesday to Miss Clarkson, daughter of Mr. H. Clarkson, of Pall Mall.

In 1911 Mr H Clarkson, wife and daughter Doris, were living in Castle Terrace. Doris was 8 so could not be the bride of Dosh only 3 years later. There was no older sister—the census asks how many children there are (including any which had died) and states they had only one child. The Clarksons had only been married 12 years and were in their mid thirties so there is unlikely to have been a child of an earlier marriage. In fact there is no female Clarkson married in the Rochford District until 1929.

So did Francis Turnnidge marry a different William Osborne or did the paper get it wrong?

NEWS FROM THE HERITAGE CENTRE ARCHIVES

Recent Acquisitions

A Torpedo bottle

This glass bottle was found in Leigh Creek by Peter Osborne, a fisherman, in the 1970s gets its name from its shape. It is about 8 ins long and dates from c1900 and would have contained aerated water. Such bottles were designed to withstand the pressure of the carbonated water and were stored on their sides to keep the corks moist. It is embossed with 'A. S. Watson & Co. HONG KONG CHINA MANILA' and the Trade Mark of a pagoda flanked by a dragon and a unicorn - donated by Val Flatley.

Kelly's Directory of 1929 for the Southend District listing all the residents of Leigh - donated by Mr Smart.

A Boxed set of Brass Hydrometers

These are floats for measuring the specific gravity of alcohol content. They belonged to Henry Choppin of the Smack and later passed to his son Leonard (born in the back room of the Smack in 1906) – donated by Mr Choppin.

On display

In the main display cabinet in the Heritage Centre at present is an exhibition of vases and decorative pieces produced in the Victoria Pottery in Leigh. The vases are characterised by seed glaze and large coloured roses. The other decorative pieces have a rustic finish and there are two lions modelled on the lions in Trafalgar Square. The Victoria pottery was on Leigh Road opposite where the Grand Hotel now stands. It was in operation for over 50 years and closed in 1899. Most of the items on display would have been produced in the 1890s.

Exhibition

An exhibition was held upstairs at the Heritage Centre to coincide with the Maritime Festival. Over 200 visitors were very interested in photographs of Leigh's listed buildings and maps of the conservation areas. The main display, spread over four tables, were photographs of Leigh High Street 'Then and Now', using the large archive of photographs which we have, taken in 1974 and comparable photographs taken by Ed Simpson this year. There were also Victorian photographs of the same locations.



LEIGH'S RIOTOUS POLICEMAN

This splendid looking fellow is Sgt Larter, Police Sergeant at Leigh, who retired from the Force in 1913. Sgt Larter had had a colourful career commencing in July 1885 in Chelmsford where he was very soon thrown in at the deep end when rioting broke out over the General Election in the November and December of that year.

During the election period riots had broken out all over the County and beyond and Constable Larter was seriously injured when a stone hit him in the head and resulted in him having to wear an eye patch for 2 years—he became known as the 'one eyed policeman'.

Arthur Daniel **LARTER** was born at Frostenden in Kent in 1861. He joined the police on 5 June 1885, having been a carpenter. He was aged 24, married and almost 5 feet 9 inches tall. As Constable 14 he was posted to Witham on 10 April 1886, then to Sheering on 20 May 1895. He was Acting Sergeant on 1 April 1900 and Sergeant 56 on 1 January 1902, posted and to Matching on 2 August 1902. On 23 July 1906 he was posted to Southend and was later at Leigh. He received 7/6 from the Magistrates for stopping a runaway horse on 3 March 1903 and 10 shillings for stopping two runaway horses on 5 June 1907. Another time he was chasing 3 thieves across a cattle field when he fell into a well up to his armpits, but he caught the thieves and was commended by the Bench. Later still he caught 3 men by the roadside stealing ducks. There was an intense fight with one of them, whom he arrested and again got a commendation from the Bench.

Sgt Larter was well known by shopkeepers in Leigh and Southend for he was the officer who detected a shoplifting gang and recovered several loads of property by examining dustbins in back yards at night, finding in one a tin of Pheasant brand tongue that had been stolen. He kept the tin as a memento.

His standing was great in the Force and on his retirement the Chief Constable visited Leigh to bid him farewell. He was pensioned on 30 June 1913 just before the Southend Constabulary was formed and died on 9 June 1943. 5

The Chelmsford Chronicle of 8 August 1913 carried the following article –

LEIGH ON ITS DIGNITY

Remarkable scenes were witnessed at Leigh, when certain inhabitants avenged what they termed an insult to their native place by burning the effigy of a Southend Town Councillor on the mud after carrying it through the streets. The offence alleged was that at a public meeting at Southend the Councillor referred to Leigh as 'that dirty little slum village'.

The 'Director of Ceremonies' (at the burning) was attired in deep mourning, and led the procession, those taking part also being attired in black.

The cortege proceeded slowly up Leigh Hill and traversed the principal streets of the town to the accompaniment of an euphonium. The player opened with a few bars of the Dead March, and quickly changed into 'The Soldiers of the King', 'Sally broke the jam pot' etc. The burning took place near Billet Wharf, and was witnessed by a very large crowd. The coffin was placed on the top of a pile of faggots 30ft high, and was burned to the refrain of 'Who Killed Cock Robin?'.*

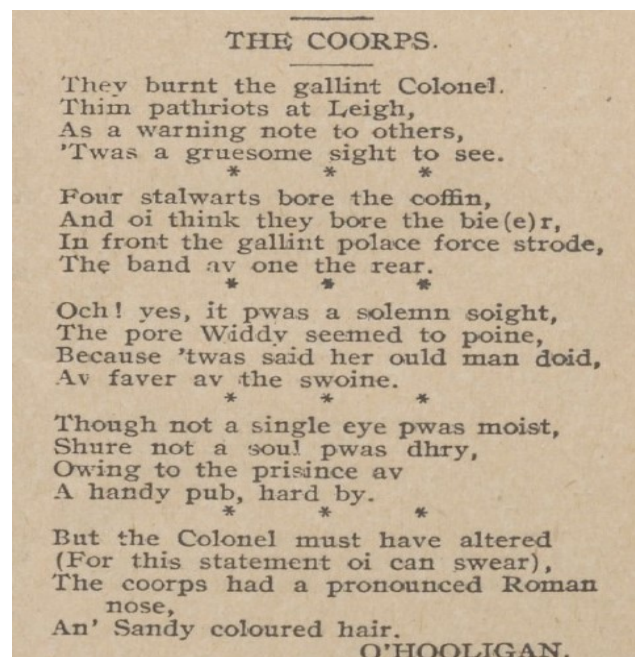
THAT DIRTY LITTLE SLUM VILLAGE—LEIGH'S REVENGE

Readers may recall the piece on the left which is a previous issue of Leighway repeated here as a reminder.

With diligent research through local newspapers (Southend and Westcliff Graphic, 1913) we can now reveal who the culprit was.



The three miscreants were Tarpot Perry—real name Frank, Gassy Filbey and Timber Ellis. Does anyone know the real names of Gassy and Timber? This cartoon of the event indicates it did not take place in August however the picture above was from a July edition of the Graphic.



TARPOT TO THE RESCUE



This rather sad picture shows a long time resident of Leigh, Jenny Houghton, being turfed out of her wooden cottage near the cockle sheds where she had lived for 41 years.

Here she sits outside with all her furniture. The gentleman is Tarpot Perry (he of the burned effigy) who happened to be passing at the time and carried Jenny's furniture to a room which had been taken for her.

The picture appeared in the local press on 1 August 1913.

Jane, known as Jenny, Houghton had been born in Stogumber in Somerset in 1825 and in the 1911 census is shown as living at 6 The Strand, in the High Street. She had been a widow for 29 years and in 1911 her widowed son William was living with her. The newspaper does not refer to William being evicted.

Jane had married James Houghton of Leigh in 1853 in Middlesex, where James was recorded as a mariner/fisherman. It is likely that James and Jane met in the Dolphin pub at Hungerford Market in Westminster where Jane was a domestic servant in 1851.

According to Mogg's New Picture of London and Visitor's Guide to its Sights, 1844—

Hungerford Market was for many years a disgrace to the metropolis: as a market, it existed in name only, and was altogether a nuisance. The present elegant and convenient structure was erected from designs by Mr. Fowler in 1831 and 1833. It consists of three grand divisions. The upper one forms a quadrangle, flanked by colonnades with dwellings and shops. The centre, or great hall, a lofty building, is formed of four rows of granite columns, with arches springing from them to support the roof; both quadrangles are appropriated to the sale of butcher's meat, poultry, fruit, vegetables, butter, eggs, &c. The lower quadrangle, the descent to which is by a spacious flight of steps, contains the fish-market: this is also a large quadrangle; at the lower end of which a wharf or quay, with convenient landings, has been formed. Hungerford Market is altogether one of the greatest improvements the metropolis has experienced. Its opposition to Billingsgate has been hitherto ineffectual; and as a rival to Covent Garden it has entirely failed, to the great regret of all the respectable residents in its vicinity..... The establishment of a good fish-market here has, however, proved a great convenience to the public. The formation of floating piers at the quay, to facilitate time arrival and departure of the numerous steam-boats that start from hence during the summer every quarter of an hour, for the City, Westminster, and Vauxhall, and at other times for Greenwich and Woolwich, are advantages for which the public are indebted to the spirited proprietors of Hungerford Market.



Hungerford Market (below painting by William Henry Pyne) was eventually pulled down to make way for

**ANNUAL LEIGH SOCIETY
WILTON LUNCH**

**23 OCTOBER 2016
SEE FLYER WITH THIS
LEIGHWEAY FOR DETAILS
FIRST COME,
FIRST SERVED**

HADLEIGH CASTLE.

By Norman Sutcliffe (with a bit of historic licence)

On Hadleigh hill the castle stands,
A monument past it's prime
But crumbling proudly, with head held high,
It defies the march of time.

So stands this ancient edifice,
A relic of it's age,
But Oh what stories it could tell;
If one could turn the page.

In the weathered stones, where pigeons
roost
And Jackdaws rear their young,
There once were standing battlements,
From where the rocks were flung.

For the castle was a fortress,
A sentinel on guard,
Where soldiers fought to protect the land,
From invaders, pressing hard.

So stand inside the old remains,
And hear again the sound
Of horses cantering up the road
And arrows whistling round.

Take time to listen and reflect,
While memory recalls,
Remembering all the lives lost here
While standing in these walls.

Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the particular author and not necessarily those of the committee and officers of the Society. **We hope you will like to keep your copy of Leighway,**



STRAND WHARF AT LAST!!!!

After many years the Town Council has at last managed the refurbishment of Strand Wharf. Looking at it from the Heritage Centre it looks pretty good and is being well used already for events and schools, as well as casual visitors.

Our very own Poet Laureate, Norman Sutcliffe, who looks after the Conduit in the Old Town, has taken on the task of planting and caring for the plants on the Wharf – and a great job he is making of it—here are a couple of photos of his handiwork. Norman has used plants especially selected for their hardiness in seaside conditions.

Do get down to the Old Town and take advantage of this new open space in Leigh



Articles for Leighway always welcome—email them top carole.mulroney@btinternet.com or to Carole at 83 Southsea Avenue, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 2BH