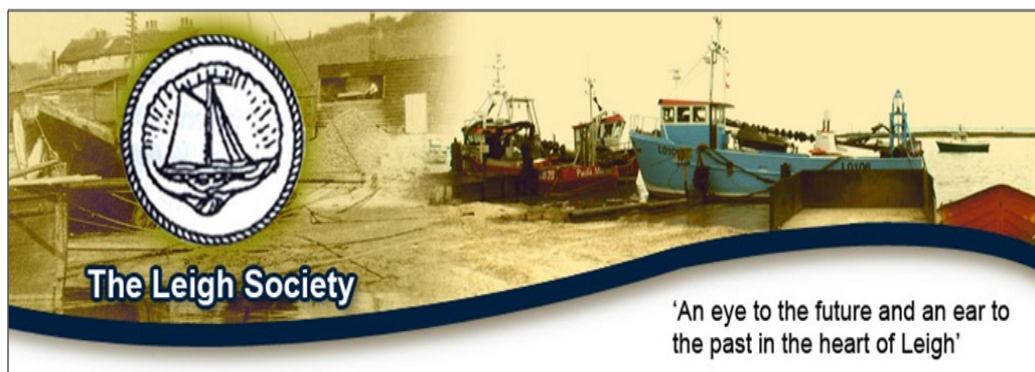


LEIGHWAY

ISSUE 52

2017



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

Deadline for next edition is 20 August 2017

THE AGM

With this issue of Leighway you will have received your papers for the AGM. As always these include the election of your committee for the forthcoming year. As we are required to do we ask for nominations from you but we never get any. Now that could be because you think we are all doing a wonderful job and that is very comforting, but every committee needs new blood now and again and so we would like you to think about whether or not you would like to participate. If the answer is yes then get yourself nominated—it may mean a vote—and you may not win—but it shows us that people are willing to come forward and even if not on the committee might like to get more involved in our projects.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dear Members – once again it is my pleasure to thank you all for your support during the year. Your committee has been, as always, working hard on your behalf, attending meetings, organizing events, looking at planning applications, attending to the upkeep of the Heritage Centre and in some cases also working, with our other hard working stewards, in the Museum.

Committee members are very aware of the need for new blood to help run the Society. I would ask those members with children and grandchildren to try to get them involved – pass on some of your enthusiasm to them. If they live in Leigh their interest is really important, as some of us are too old to go on for much longer.

I am really pleased to have this opportunity to praise and to thank the Leigh Town Council for the refurbishment of Strand Wharf in the old town. Many regular visitors have remarked on the improvement and it has been invaluable for the festivals held last year. We will shortly have some redecoration of the Heritage Centre, adding to the smartening up of the area.

Again, my thanks to you all, and I hope to see you all at events during the year.

Ann Price

Don't forget we have more talks this year—put them in your diary

DIARY DATES

(our events are marked with * and are at Wesley Methodist Church at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated)

19 April (AGM) - Thames Estuary Partnership—Amy Pryor*

22 April—Celebrating Leigh Together —Leigh Community Centre at 10am supported by Leigh Society

17 May—The Effect of the Great War on Local Children—Andrew Emeny*

19 May—Leigh Society Quiz—7 pm at Leigh Community Centre*

10-17 June—Leigh Art Trail

21 June—History of the RNLI including locally - Linda Cook*

6 August—Heritage Day on Strand Wharf—a Leigh Town Council event supported by the Leigh Society

20 September—Rayleigh Through Time—Mike Davies, Rayleigh Town Museum*

18 October - Thames Barges in the Blackwater—Stephen Nunn*

15 November—Tales from Hadleigh, Thundersley and Daws Heath History—Robert Hallmann*

24 November—Leigh Lights

9 December—Carols on Strand Wharf

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Leigh Society has been actively involved in the affairs of Leigh in 2016 in many ways.

We have promoted Leigh 's history through our heritage centre and open day at the community centre and participated in the old Leigh maritime festival and regatta.

The membership has remained stable and through our meetings on various subjects, and thanks to Ann, outings to Audley End and the Southwold Summer Theatre, we are able to keep in touch with our members. Affiliated to the River Thames Society we are kept informed about life on the Thames, from source to estuary. Many members of the Society enjoyed lively visits to Leigh and our annual lunch on the Essex Yacht Club, Wilton.

Planning matters -

As a Society we have been asked for comments on plans affecting Leigh conservation areas and environs with mixed outcomes. Due to the increasing popularity of living in Leigh developers are romping through Leigh with some unwelcome uglification and lots of flats and Leigh's residential character is changing rapidly from its mainly mixed, modest and small scale nature.

There has been rise in letting properties which does not encourage involvement in local community affairs and concerns.

We look forward to the completion of the Bell Hotel development so freeing up the important access to the old town.

Thanks to Jennifer and Ed Simpson and the U3A shared learning project, in partnership with the Leigh Society they have published a book 'Letters from Leigh' which will be launched soon and sold in the heritage centre. This is from letters written to Canon Robert Stuart King by his mother, Julianna, taken from our archives where they are on permanent loan from the family. They give an interesting account of life in Leigh in the 1880s.

Thank you all for your continued support and interest in the affairs of Leigh

Margaret Buckey

THE LEIGH POET STRIKES AGAIN

THOUGHTS OF LEIGH.

As I stroll along the cinder path
On an excursion by the sea,
Between the railway and the waves,
I enjoy my reverie.

The metal lines are on my left,
But more lively is the sea,
The waves lap gently on the beach
And peace comes over me.

I watch the turnstones as they pick
Their way along the shore
Investigating cockle shells,
They gulp, then look for more.

I pause and see the waves advance,
Hiding the wrinkled sand
And study the sails of the passing boats,
Sucked in by the wind from the land.

The Essex Yacht Club looms ahead,
I recall some boats from the past,
The Bembridge, Lady Saville and Gypsy,
Now the Wilton is the last.

Soon Gypsy bridge with majestic curve
And steel so strong and hard
Dominates the eastern sky,
Like a sentinel on guard.

Then I return and retrace my steps
And wander into Old Leigh,
I stop at The Smack and savour a pint,
It's great to live by the sea.



THERE WAS A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE—MEMORIES OF DR SAY

A request for information on Dr 'Say' carried in our last edition revealed that this was Dr George Sainmont who owned Ivy Cottage and Prospect House on Leigh Hill from at least 1930 to his death in 1953. He is reported to have been reclusive, living in Ivy Cottage with only a housekeeper/secretary for company. In 1920 he was practicing in Highgate and by 1930 he is recorded as having a medical practice in Wimpole Street, W1 but had previously held positions in medical institutions in Liege (where he qualified in 1902), Paris, Breslau, Leiden and Berlin. He was still listed in Wimpole Street in 1942 although clearly living in Leigh. He died in 1953 leaving his entire estate to his housekeeper, Gertrude Willmott.*

Several Members recalled the doctor

Margaret Tothill— During the war my mother's cousin was unwell after the birth of her baby and went into hospital. As her husband was away in the RAF there was nowhere for the baby to go so my mother brought him to live at our house. The baby wasn't thriving so she took him to Dr Sainmont. I went along too and remember he spoke with a strong foreign accent. I too think he was Belgian. He prescribed semolina for the baby which provoked a certain amount of surprise all round, but it worked.

Jill Welsh—People from the current congregation of Crowstone Church recall being treated by Dr Sainmont and Jill recalls when she fell ill in the mid 30s as an infant her mother was advised to take her to Dr Sainmont which she did and Jill was put on a dairy free diet (and has not touched milk since) and steak and carrots—every day minced beef and boiled carrots for a number of years—and she was cured. Even as a 3 year old bridesmaid at a wedding Jill politely asked at the reception 'am I having steak and carrots?'

Dorothy Hawkins—doesn't remember the diet but does remember the ban on dairy products.

There was one other person who contacted me but I am afraid I have lost the note of our conversation so if it was you please get in touch again—Carole

*Leigh Hill by Carol Edwards where you can also find more about the life of Gertrude after the Doctor's death. And about the Doctor himself



The Leigh-on-Sea Branch of the Royal British Legion celebrates its 80th anniversary this year, having been formed on 22 July 1937 and holding its inaugural meeting at St Clements Hall on 22 September that year. The current Members are planning to celebrate the occasion with an Anniversary Luncheon on 22 September this year, 80 years to the day .

The reason for the formation of the branch was summed up by a statement made to the local newspaper at the time, The Leigh News, by Mr. F.F. Carter, Branch Secretary **"I have been approached by a number of ex-servicemen in Leigh with the idea of forming a new branch of the British Legion in their district. One reason is that of saving fares to Southend & Westcliff where the only branches are, the usual cost of this is about 6d (2.5p) which is more than the average chap can afford."**

The first meeting opened with a silent tribute to friends who had fallen in the service of their Country as every meeting still does. The principles of the Legion were outlined by Capt. R. W. Smith Stewart, the area secretary, who said he was pleased to see representatives from the Westcliff & Southend branches present and that they too welcomed the idea of the formation of a branch in Leigh. After the election of officers, it was decided that the annual subscription would be 5 Shillings (25p).

It was a very impressive scene and over 40 standards were paraded followed by a march past to Marine Parade, where the salute was taken by Admiral Sir Henry Bruce, chairman of the London area. He congratulated all those taking part and said that as boy scouts do a good turn every day so the members of the British Legion should always be on the lookout to help and render assistance whether to a member of the Legion or not.

The Branch has almost 60 Members and meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at the Moose Hall in Cranleigh Drive. So far the Branch has raised a record £32,802.30 for the current 2016/17 Poppy Appeal. New Members are always welcome to every meeting.

Happy anniversary and long may you continue.



Supporting the Fishing Industry and the Port in Leigh-on-Sea and the North Thames

The North Thames Fisheries Local Action Group (NTFLAG) will tackle challenges and make the most of opportunities to achieve a sustainable fishing and cockling industry and active Port in and around Leigh-on-Sea for many years to come. Leigh has been home to an active fishing port for over 1000 years and it is now the last of its kind on the North Thames.

The port is a defining feature of the area and supports tourism and the local economy. However, its future cannot be taken for granted. There are many challenges we need to tackle together if there is to be another 1000 years of fishing and cockling in the area.

The NTFLAG is a three year programme funded by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund between 2017 and 2020. It is to be managed in the area by the Thames Estuary Partnership working with the Marine Management Organisation and many local partners—including local fishermen and cocklers, the Borough Council, Leigh Town Council (represented by Carole Mulrone), Leigh Port Partnership, the PLA and others and including the Leigh Society, represented by Clive Webster.

There are five priorities that the NTFLAG will address:

Leigh Quay Infrastructure—undertaking work to look at how best to stop Leigh Creek and other important channels to the port from silting up, ensuring access for vessels continues whilst using sustainable approaches to achieve it. Also looking at improving facilities on the quays.

Environmental Monitoring of the Estuary—independent research into how the environment of the Thames Estuary is changing, and how this may be affecting fish stocks.

Promotion and marketing—working with the industry to better promote the local catch including Protected Geographic Identity for Leigh Cockles and direct selling from the trawlers.

New training and education courses—relating to the fishing and wider maritime industries, supporting a ‘classroom of the coast’ and more ‘citizen science’.

Culture and Heritage—projects celebrating the history and heritage of the fishing industry in Leigh and the North Thames area, making sure it remains an important part of the local culture and identity.

The FLAG has received a grant of £800,000 to carry out this work which will in turn help attract funding from other sources to enable the projects to move forward.

LET'S GET QUIZZICAL

Our annual quiz will be held at the Community Centre on Friday, 19 May starting at 7pm. A flyer is included with your Leighway so get your places booked early.

There will be the usual fish and chip supper but you can bring your own drinks and nibbles.

Tickets will be £10 and we will have tables of eight so get together with your friends and book now.

If you can't make up a full table don't despair we are a friendly bunch and love to meet new friends.

OUR GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND?



We all see it as we turn our eyes downwards. It lurks in the gutter, cowers by the edge of the path or flaps crazily wrapped around the branches of a bramble. It tries to look inoffensive but its presence is disquieting; so much so that we react in different ways. Some of us avert our gaze, others tut tut and move on and some of us decide to do something about it.

Leigh is a wonderful town but like many towns in this country it is blighted by litter. Notorious blackspots include the south side of railings running alongside Belton Way, Prittlebrook, the railway side of the Cinder Path, Leigh Marshes service road and Two Tree Island, most notably the southern car park (You can probably supply a few choices of your own). Here you can see it all; people's disposable lives written large with their wet wipes, plastic drink bottles, aluminium beer cans, sweet wrappers, food packaging and last week's free newspapers – not forgetting fly-tippers and the depressing calling card of anti-social dog walkers. In this car-obsessed society people choose to empty the litter contents of their vehicle into the landscape rather than have the inconvenience of taking it home. Some people even wrap up the contents in a plastic bag and lob it into the scrub, where some poor sucker will take ages to extricate it from the thorns and branches.

Littering is a visual indicator of the way we treat our environment and ultimately the planet we live on. The Great British Spring Clean was a chance for local groups to get together and do something about it. Armed with pickers, plastics bags, gloves and a nose of rooting around in the undergrowth we set about Belton Hills eventually pulling out 45 sacks of rubbish to go off to the landfill. My own harvest reaped the usual detritus of cans and bottles plus broken glass and a syringe. My guess is that the area will remain clean for a few weeks, then a few pieces of litter will appear and in a few months time it will be back to its old dirty self. Because littering is habit forming.

And it's worse in the rivers. Thames 21, clean-up specialists, remove over 800 tonnes of litter from the Thames every year. A small group of volunteers in Thurrock over a sixteen month period moved over 34,000 items of litter from the shoreline. The Thames is our greatest asset and one of the most iconic rivers in the world and if we can't respect this then what chance elsewhere? Squads of volunteers can only do so much and council cleaning services are already overstretched.

However, there is a solution. It requires a several-pronged attack but other countries have conquered their litter problems so why not us? The essential plan is to stop people littering in the first place. This can be done by installing more multi-purpose litter bins in key areas (so there is no excuse).

At the same time, extend the maximum distance for emptying bins from the roadside from 75 yards to 150 yards. Put up warning signs and increase the fine for non compliance from £75 to £150.

Employ people to tidy up and issue on the spot fines for litter and dog fouling. Thurrock, again, one of the worst hit areas, employs four enforcement officers (litter bashers) who have levied fines of over £60,000 in less than three months of which £40,000 has already been paid and which will go towards more bashers.

Encourage dog walkers, who are outside everyday visiting the open spaces, to go out with a litter picker and black sack.

And finally, the government must attack the amount of plastic by applying deposits to encourage people to return their empties. We'll never conquer it completely but isn't it about time we reversed the trend?

Clive Webster

SUBSCRIPTIONS

After many years of keeping subs at the same level we are afraid we will have to raise these from January 2018. The new subs will be £12 per household which is extremely good value and less than many other organisations.

For those of you who pay by standing order this will mean a change which you will have to advise to your banks. With this Leighway we are enclosing a standing order form for you to do so, and to encourage other members to use this system as it saves us quite a bit of administrative time and costs. Thank you for your help on this and enjoy your Leighway

61 BROADWAY THEN AND NOW



Brockman and Shepherd were local butchers, fishmongers, poultryers, game dealers, fruiterers and florists and had shops in Hamlet Court Road, Leigh Road East and Alexandra Street in Southend as well as in Leigh Broadway.

In the second photo it is the right hand side of what is now Zinc.

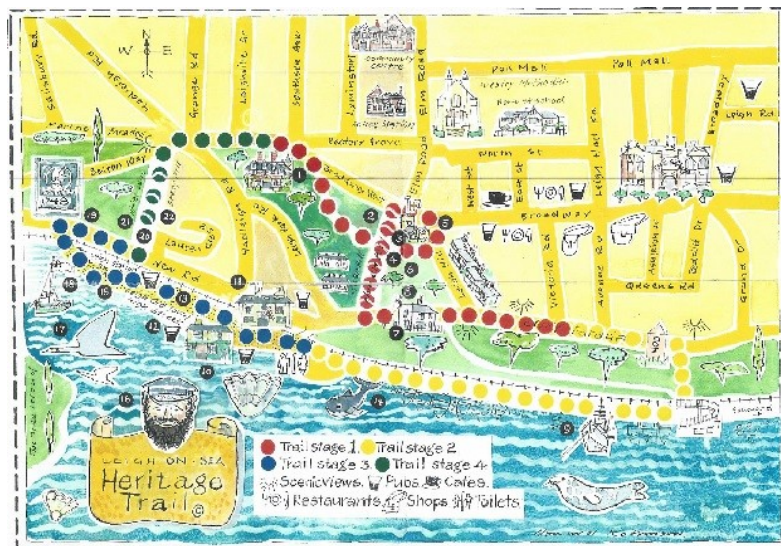
LEIGH HERITAGE TRAIL

If Two Tree Island is one of the worst kept secrets in the town, then Leigh Society's Leigh Heritage Trail is one of the best kept. Going now for three years, the website has attracted over 4,000 hits but few people know about it.

The circular trail is a virtual trail which means there are no pavement clutter of signs, information boards or plaques – everything is done by referring to the small brochure that accompanies the trail or online using a smart device. The trail covers all the famous sights of Leigh and offers exhilarating views of the Estuary.

Running under Google Maps it helps the user to navigate and click on points of interest. In essence it showcases the town. The trail is broken down into four stages marked in red, yellow, blue and green and is 1.8 miles (2.9 kms) long. It takes approximately 45-60 minutes but most people will be tempted to stop off at one of the many pubs! You can join and leave the trail at any time and you can go in either direction (though it's described and numbered in a clockwise direction). Due to the steepness of sections, the trail is for able-bodied persons only and sturdy footwear is recommended. At certain times of the year protection against the elements is advisable and a pair of binoculars will add to the experience.

Why not have a go today by visiting www.leighsociety.com and clicking Leigh Heritage Trail? Or pay a visit to the Heritage Centre and purchase one of our Guides to the Trail which is packed with information and this great map produced by local artist, Howard Robinson, which everyone can enjoy.



A SUNDAY SCHOOL HYMN BOOK

I am always looking for old books and especially those that have an inscription or a book plate—so I can find out about the owner. Recently in a Leigh charity shop for the princely sum of 25p I picked up a little black book—no not that kind— it was a Methodist Sunday School Hymn Book and inside was this lovely book plate.



My research has shown that Violet Hockley was Violet Esther Hockley born in Whitechapel in 1892, the daughter of David and Elizabeth Hockley. David was a railway platelayer.

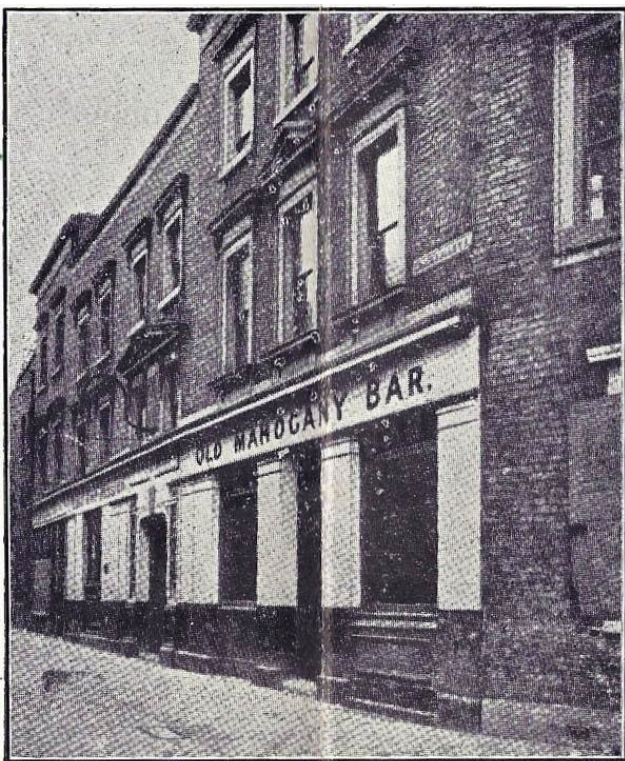
The Hymn Book was presented to her in 1899 and it shows that she attended the Old Mahogany Bar Wesleyan Sunday School. The Mahogany Bar Mission, part of the East London Wesleyan Methodist Mission, was opened on 5 February 1888 and described at the opening ceremony as ‘Methodism’s finest hall’. Situated between Cable Street and St Katharine’s Dock and serving one of the poorest neighbourhoods of late nineteenth-century London, it was housed in the former Wilton’s Music Hall building (1859-1880), which is now having a new lease of life through restoration and is a visitor attraction.

The Methodists named their new mission after the music hall bar because they saw alcohol as the main cause of the East End’s social ills and were proclaiming their arrival as a triumph of good over evil. The Methodists ran The Mahogany Bar for nearly seventy years. As well as holding religious services and spreading the Christian message, the mission was actively involved in improving living conditions in the East End, most notably during the 1889 London Docks Strike when over a thousand meals a day were served to the starving dockers’ families at the Mahogany Bar. The mission also set up a whole network of social service, distributing food and second-hand clothes, running clubs and country outings and providing free medical assistance before the start of the National Health Service.

In 1911 Violet and her family were living in Barking and Violet was a goldlayer i.e. she used blocks to impress gold leaf onto book bindings.

In 1931 Violet married John Veil and by 1939 on the outbreak of war they too were living in Barking. John died in 1954 and sometime after Violet moved to Hadleigh Road, Leigh. She died there in 1964. And now over 50 years later her little hymnal is still in Leigh .

It’s a bit of a long shot but does anyone remember Violet—if you do please get in touch—Carole



A GENEALOGIST’S DILEMMA AN OSBORNE MYSTERY

In the Autumn 2016 edition of Leighway the veracity of an Osborne/Clarkson marriage was posed and I asked if anyone of the Osborne family could help.

In 1882 William John (Dosh) Osborne married Mary Amelia Osborne. Mary Amelia died in 1912 and 2 years later William remarried as the records show Frances Turnnidge. However, local newspapers carried an entry for January 1914 of a marriage of William ‘Dosh’ to Francis Clarkson.

Member George Savill was able to confirm that William was born in 1857 and married Mary Amelia Osborne in 1882 and then had 12 children. Dosh then married Anne Turnnidge (presumably this is Francis) in 1914 and had one son, Horace. So whoever it was that married Ms Clarkson it wasn’t Dosh—although I would need to get the marriage certificate to be absolutely sure of that.

Picture reproduced by kind permission of ‘The Gentle Author’
www.spitalfieldslife.com

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

The Society is not holding an open day this year—but don't despair we are joining forces with other groups on two heritage themed events.

Celebrating Leigh Together —21 and 22 April at Leigh Community Centre—This event is organised by Blade Education supported by the Leigh British Leigh, Essex Society for Family History and the Leigh Society. It is a community project bringing together young and old to celebrate our Town. It is a two part project which comprises a community exhibition 'What Leigh Means to Me' which will be built with the school children of Leigh and local artists. The second part is a tea party for local organisations and schools to come together and celebrate Leigh while forging links that will make our town culturally richer in the future.

Whether its Leigh today or in the past, Leigh means something to everyone who lives here. It is a special place with a community to match - so the organisers are asking young and old, amateur or professional to contribute to the exhibition with photos, poetry, drawings, paintings, letters, stories which relate their feelings about Leigh. All materials should be no larger than A4 and can be brought to Leigh Community Centre from 2pm on Friday 21 April or emailed to beth@blade-education.org.uk.



Local children creating a banner for Celebrating Leigh Together

Invitations will be going out for the special afternoon tea which aims to bring the generations together from all the organisations that make Leigh thrive. The event will be at 3pm at the Community Centre on 22 April and if you would like to nominate someone or for further information contact beth@blade-education.org.uk or on 0207 097 3935 (voicemail).

Heritage Day on Strand Wharf—6 August—this event is being organised by Leigh Town Council with the support of the Leigh Society and will feature a range of exhibitions and items of interest including linking in with the Lower Thames Annual Pier Race and other interesting items on Victoria Wharf. It is at the early planning stages so keep the date free.

The Leigh Society's theme for the day will be Education in Leigh so if you have any memorabilia, stories and pictures from your family relating to schooling in Leigh from years gone by please get in touch with Carole

ITS ALL GOING ON IN LEIGH

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, but if not please recycle it**
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**Remember to book your
quiz tickets early for
19 May**