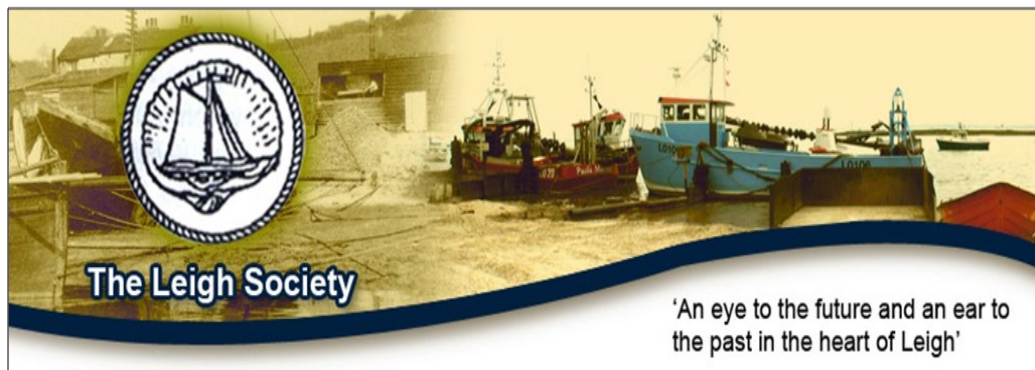


# LEIGHWAY ISSUE 53 SUMMER 2017



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Articles for Leighway are always welcome. Please email them to carole.mulroney@btinternet.co m or send to Carole at 83 Southsea Avenue, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 2BH	
Deadline for next edition is	
31 August 2017	

## HERITAGE DAY ON STRAND WHARF

As part of its programme of summer events on Strand Wharf, Leigh Town Council and the Leigh Society have come together to hold a heritage day on Sunday 6 August between 11 and 4. There will be stalls from a variety of local historical societies, authors and related activities.

Carole is currently working for the Leigh Society with the Southend Society and the South East Essex Building Preservation Trust to promote and protect our locally listed buildings. These are buildings which are not appropriate for national listing but nevertheless have an historical significance to the local area. They do not receive the protection of a nationally listed building so are vulnerable to development or inappropriate changes. The Societies are hopeful that the Borough Council will see this as a positive step in maintaining the heritage of the Borough.

## LYNN TAIT

**It was with great regret that we heard the news of the passing of Lynn. She has been a great ambassador for Leigh over many years with great success.**

**We send our sincere condolences to Lynn's family.**

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

A reminder that after many years of keeping subs at the same level we are raising them 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, or if you would like to, please revise this with your bank and if you need a form please contact carole.mulroney@btinternet.com. This saves money which we can plough back into the Heritage Centre and Society. Also if you would like to receive your Leighway by email please email Carole at the same email address. Thank you for your help on this and enjoy your Leighway

## DIARY

**6 August—Heritage Day on Strand Wharf**

**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**

- Leigh Society talks at Wesley Methodist, Elm Road starting at 7.30pm. Entry £2 members £3 visitors

## HARK TO THE LISTENING BENCH

The Listening Bench for Southend is a U3A Shared Learning Project in partnership with the Essex Record Office and Sound Archive. Members of Leigh Estuary, Leigh, Southend and Thorpe Bay U3As have all taken part. Ten people have worked hard listening to hours of recordings about Southend and then selecting sound clips for the bench. Members also learned how to use "Audacity" software to edit the recordings.

The listening bench is part of a Heritage Lottery Funded project, *You Are Hear: sound and a sense of place*. Volunteers across Essex have been listening to recordings about their community from the Essex Sound and Video Archive, selecting relevant clips and editing them into an audio montage that gives a taste of the community's heritage. This montage is then loaded onto the bench, so that members of the public can play the clips at the touch of a button.

For Southend the chosen audio includes memories of childhood visits to the Kursaal and the seaside, how the Second World War affected the town and songs inspired by Southend. The bench for Southend will be the first of ten benches to be installed this summer, following eight benches that were completed last year.

This is a great achievement and assists in presenting the U3A as a learning co-operative for retired people, showing the ability of older people to take part in valuable projects in their local community and learn new skills in the process.

Jenny Simpson

## WHEN LEIGH WORKERS WERE FOREIGNERS

From 'Our Town' encyclopaedia (1950)

Said to be due to the weak local Trade Union organisation in most trades, Southend has had very few strikes for a town of its size. Nevertheless there have been a number of notable ones:

- in public utilities
- the "lightning" strike in 1919
- "sympathy with the miners" strike in 1921
- Southend Gas Light & Coke Co.
- in public transport the strike over schedules at the City Bus Co. in 1947
- in industrial plants, the one-day strike at the EKCO factory in 1946.

The most remarkable strike occurred early in the Century when workers at a firm in the centre of Southend stopped work in protest against the employment of "foreign" labour from Leigh.

The most notable lock-out was probably that at the Shoebury brickfields of Eastwoods Ltd in 1889. This involved 77 workers, and was imposed because of a strike by 14 men which followed the rejection of a wage increase of 1d per 1,000 bricks.

Ed Simpson

## LEIGH IS NOT ALL ABOUT FISH

According to Antiquary King's Manor of Leigh the goods landed at Leigh during the early part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century were not all of the flapping fin kind. The commodities are listed in order that tolls and beaconage (money paid for the maintenance of a beacon) could be charged.

In 1727 Leigh saw the following goods brought ashore – Chalk and rubbish – mackerel – cherries – hay – calves – brandy – malt – sprats – cauliflowers – herrings – faggots – whiting - household goods – coals – tiles – carrots – fowls – cod – oakum - tobacco pipes – barley – beans – hops – timber – peas

Several pleasure yachts debunked passengers and a corpse

## A COASTGUARD'S LOT IS NOT ALWAYS A HAPPY ONE

In 1871 the Coastguard complement at Leigh included Edward Sicely age 39 born in Torcross in Devon but living at Goldstone Cottages, Leigh. I don't know where this is but could it have been a mishearing for Coastguard Cottages?

Edward's naval records show he was born on 23 July 1833 and when he joined the Penelope in 1873 at Leigh he was 5ft 3in with black hair and eyes and a sallow complexion. He had a cross tattooed on his right arm and a tree on his left and was of excellent character.

No.	Character	Ship	Age	Entry	Discharge	Cause	Time
1	at sea	Penelope	18	23 July 50	24 May 57		
2	at sea	Penelope	20	15 May 57	8 March 58		
3	at sea	Penelope	22	7 Mar 58	12 July 58		
4	at sea	Penelope	24	21 Nov 58	27 Dec 58		
5	at sea	Penelope	26	28 Dec 58	17 July 59		
6	at sea	Rose	28	12 July 59	17 April 60		
7	at sea	Rose	30	18 Dec 59	17 July 60		
8	at sea	Rose	32	18 Dec 60	17 July 61		
9	at sea	Rose	34	18 Dec 61	17 July 62		
10	at sea	Rose	36	18 Dec 62	17 July 63		
11	at sea	Rose	38	18 Dec 63	17 July 64		
12	at sea	Rose	40	18 Dec 64	17 July 65		
13	at sea	Rose	42	18 Dec 65	17 July 66		
14	at sea	Rose	44	18 Dec 66	17 July 67		
15	at sea	Rose	46	18 Dec 67	17 July 68		
16	at sea	Rose	48	18 Dec 68	17 July 69		
17	at sea	Rose	50	18 Dec 69	17 July 70		
18	at sea	Rose	52	18 Dec 70	17 July 71		
19	at sea	Rose	54	18 Dec 71	17 July 72		
20	at sea	Rose	56	18 Dec 72	17 July 73		
21	at sea	Rose	58	18 Dec 73	17 July 74		
22	at sea	Rose	60	18 Dec 74	17 July 75		
23	at sea	Rose	62	18 Dec 75	17 July 76		
24	at sea	Rose	64	18 Dec 76	17 July 77		
25	at sea	Rose	66	18 Dec 77	17 July 78		

Edward's father, Hugh, was also a coastguard born in St Ives in Cornwall in 1799 and stationed at Burnham on Crouch in 1841 where the family lived in Silver Lane. By 1861 Hugh had retired on a pension and the family stayed in Burnham.

Edward had married a girl from Sandwich in Kent and was stationed at Shoebury between 1860- 1864 and then at Leigh where his last 4 children were born, the last being in 1878. He had had quite an eventful career in the Service.

On 30 November 1857 Edward Villier and Edward Bovenant, who were passengers on the brig, Charles Henri, bound for Monte Video, were charged with assaulting the mate of the Ramsgate Harbour tug, William Hazeldine, and Edward Sicely, a seaman of HM Revenue Cutter, Rose.

The previous evening Hazeldine and Sicely had passed by the prisoners in the Pier Yard when they were followed and assaulted by them. Bovenant threw Sicely against the pier wall and knocked off his cap and struck him

twice on the head with his fist.

Sicely told the Court that the prisoner had had a knife and had made to stab him. The prisoners were locked up in the Pier Cage. In court their defence had to be conducted through an interpreter and they were each fined 2/6 with 10/3 costs. If they didn't pay they were sentenced to 5 days in Sandwich Gaol - they paid.

In 1861 Edward was stationed at Shoeburyness when in late September he found a body lying on the sands. The body was that of Benjamin Vernon who had drowned on 27 September having lost his way on the sands. Some years later in 1872 Edward Sicely coxed the Meta as part of Leigh Regatta and took part in a very exciting match although sadly Meta went too far out to sea and lost the advantage.

By 1881 Edward had left the coastguard service and was living at 50 Park Street, Prittlewell and working as a school caretaker at Prittlewell Board School .

## COASTGUARD COTTAGES—THEN AND NOW (THE GARDENS)



The postcard on the left was posted in 1918 from Emily Pilcher to her sister in law, Jane Pilcher, in Kent.

Emily's husband, Fred, was a cowman on a farm in Bridge, Kent in 1911.

In 1918 they were living in the second cottage in the main block on the right





# THE SCARLET AND BLACK HIGHFIELD COLLEGE, HADLEIGH ROAD

Highfield College in Hadleigh Road held its Centenary Celebration in 1958 and the newspaper report indicates that Charles Stuart King, the older brother of Canon King of Leigh, founded the College – but the dates are awry as Charles King was not born until 1860.!

Charles married Violet Hankin in 1888 in Leigh and then went to America. They returned some time between 1894 and 1901, as Charles was Schoolmaster on the 1901 census residing at Highfield, Leigh Park (not necessarily Leigh Park Road as Leigh Park covered a large area). He was still headmaster in 1902 and Violet died in Highfield in 1904. Her death prompted a change and by 1905 Thomas Gebhardt was in charge. He was of German descent and had graduated from Magdalen College, Oxford in 1875 and later became head of Chalkwell Bay Day School.

By 1907 the Headmaster of Highfield College was Thomas J B Sandercock. Mr Sandercock was a local councillor and had previously been head of East Devon County School, Teignmough Grammar School and Sidcup College. Following his death on Christmas Day 1910 at the College his wife continued working with Mr Alfred Wilfred Cresswell who became Headmaster.

Mr Cresswell did not last long and was declared bankrupt in 1912.



**HIGHFIELD COLLEGE,**  
LEIGH-ON-SEA.  
Boarding and Day School for Boys.  
MR. A. W. CRESSWELL, Headmaster.  
MRS. T. J. B. SANDERCOCK.

Boys prepared for all Examinations. Many successes.  
The School is situated in the healthiest part of Leigh, and special attention is given to the Physical Well-being of the Boys. Well-equipped Work-shop and Photographic Dark-room. Moderate Fees.  
For Prospectus apply to the Headmaster.

In the Kelly's Directories of the period the address of the College is 76 Hadleigh Road but by 1928 the number had changed to 144. A telephone number was acquired in 1926 Leigh 405 but three years later this had changed to Leigh 25800.

In 1912 this picture appeared in the local paper, note the girls – Highfield College was a boys' school so was there a Highfield School also in Leigh?



CHILDREN ASSIST AT AN ENTERTAINMENT.  
Pupils of Miss Gurnett, of Highfield School, Leigh, who recently took part in an entertainment at "The Rest," organised by Miss Gurnett on behalf of the Parish Church extension fund. (Photo: A. W. Skinner).

SWG 24/5/12

By 1913 the Head was Norman Martyn who stayed until about 1919. In 1920 an Oswald Martyn took over the Headship but he gave way to Austin Noxon by 1922 by when it had become the leading boy's school in the district.

**HIGHFIELD COLLEGE,**  
HADLEIGH ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA.

Boarding and Day School for Boys.  
7-17.  
All Exams. Separate Depts.  
Head.—MR. AUSTIN NOXON, M.I.H., F.R.G.S.

This picture shows the boys in uniform in 1924

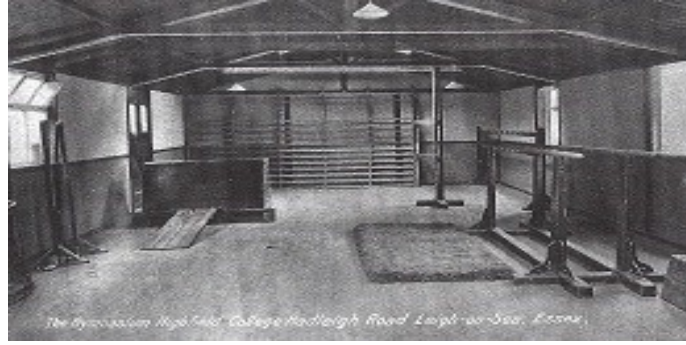
Map Ref. O.13 **Essex**

**HIGHFIELD COLLEGE**  
LEIGH-ON-SEA, ESSEX.  
Head Master.—MR. AUSTIN NOXON, M.I.H., F.R.G.S.  
(Member of Royal Society of Teachers, College of Preceptors, etc.)

**L**EIGH-ON-SEA is London's nearest seaside resort, and is only 50 minutes' direct run from Fenchurch Street Station.  
The College stands 300 feet high, facing South. There are 250 pupils, the 70 Boarders living in Junior and Senior Houses adjoining the School.  
The main buildings include Recreation Room, Library, Changing and Bath Rooms, Gymnasium, Music Rooms, etc. Central heating and electric light throughout. The College possesses excellent private Playing Fields for all organised games. The dormitories are very comfortable.  
The College includes a separate Preparatory Department for small boys from six years upwards. Boys are prepared for commercial careers or University Examinations. Music, Elocution, etc., may be taken as extras. There is a well-equipped Science Laboratory, Gymnasium, etc.  
Fees.—For Boarders, from 26 guineas per term, quite inclusive.  
Special terms for brothers. Entire charge of boys whose parents are abroad. Illustrated prospectus from the Secretary.

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The College was modernised in 1927 by the addition of a gymnasium, a well equipped laboratory and an art room.



C Settles was in sole charge by 1940. During this period the College expanded to include 158 Hadleigh Road as a hostel for 3 boarders. The College was closed for the War years reopening in 1944 and in the next 2 years over 250 boys entered the College which ranked as one of the largest Independent Schools.



By 1948, if not from its reopening, Mr Robert A Steggall was the Principal and Headmaster and it was stated that Mr Noxon had founded the College.

Mr Steggall was at the College until its close in 1965/6.

This whole line of research came about through the great generosity of 2 'Old Boys' of Highfield, David Hammond and Cliff Messiter who kindly donated their old uniforms and a wealth of memorabilia of Highfield from the 30s and 50s, including 2 canes! Tony Weber 's memories of the College will be in the next edition of Leighway. Are there anymore Old Boys out there?

David and Cliff were able to attend the recent Celebrate Leigh at the Community Centre where the Society displayed their memorabilia and caught them trying to squeeze into their old caps!!!!



Cliff Messiter and David Hammond on a visit to Celebrate Leigh and their wonderful school days at Highfield College



**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)



## THE WATERWORKS 'PLAYGROUND'

More often than not our history of Leigh focuses on the Old Town and the Broadway area—but there are many other areas of Leigh which have changed over the years and of which people have childhood memories.

This is one such memory sent from Des Phillips.

This a story may well resonate with other 70s youngsters, so if you recall the house and the area—and better still have any photos of it please get in touch with Carole who will pass them on to Des.

*"I grew up in Leigh-on-Sea during the 1970s. I lived in Essex Gardens, off Elmsleigh Drive and our local playground was the 'Waterworks Playground' (now Shannon Park) Off Shannon Drive.*

*One of the features of the 'Waterworks Playground' was a large abandoned cottage which we used to play in. All of the fitting had been stripped out, including the windows leaving a sequence of bare rooms. It stood grandly on its own. A classic haunted house. I seem to remember it was more stately, arts and crafty than the 1930s semis that crowded around. My architectural knowledge aged 7/8 was limited!*

*Once, when trying to climb up a fallen joist, I fell and had a really nasty gash on my leg. Then I never went again as it was off limits. It then burnt down about 1976 and I was able to rush over to witness the spectacle of the fire brigade trying to douse the flames. The site was quickly demolished and cleared.*

*Just as the house has left a visible scar on my leg, it has been imprinted in my mind as an incongruity with a story to tell. (It is certainly imprinted on Google Maps)"*

*I have been able to do some very interesting research about the Waterworks and "The Cottage". It was actually the steam-worked "Picketts Pumping Station" with an 801 foot deep well which became obsolete around WW2. I have discovered something of the rather sad story of the family of siblings (the Gates's) who inhabited the Cottage until they all died off in 1949, when I presume the house became derelict until it enters my early childhood."*



The site of the house as it is today on Google Earth



**06  
AUGUST  
2017**

# HERITAGE DAY

CELEBRATING LEIGH AND NEIGHBOURING TOWNS

## OLD TOWN LEIGH

Collaborating with the Lower Thames Rowing Club and their annual Pier Race.

Featuring the Thames Sailing Barge, PUDGE, displayed on Victoria Wharf.

**11.00 am - 4.00 pm**

Free Entry

A LEIGH TOWN COUNCIL EVENT, SUPPORTED BY THE LEIGH SOCIETY

## A DOUBLE COTGROVE BAPTISM

Family history research often throws up anomalies which we can only guess the reason for. One such occurrence has been found in the Cotgrove family.

In 1848 Harriet Mary Anne Cotgrove, daughter of William and Matilda Cotgrove, was baptised privately on 25 February at St Clement's.

A few weeks later she was baptised again on 2 April at St John the Baptist in Southend.

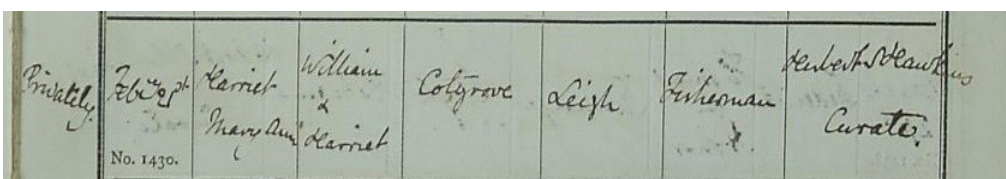
Sadly she was buried in St Clement's on 18 May—so a very short life.

The most likely explanation for this was that baby Harriet was not expected to survive and so was baptised quickly into the Church in a private ceremony, probably at home in Leigh. She then may have rallied and given the parents hope of survival so she was baptised fully into the church, albeit a different one, but then sadly succumbed and died soon after.

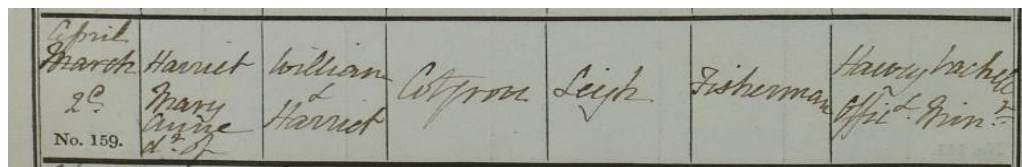
But why different churches? Possibly although the family lived in Leigh William's wife, Harriet Culham, was a Southend girl so it could be that after the initial scare and swift baptism she decided to have her daughter baptised in her own parish church.

There may have been other reasons for instance this snippet of information relates to Lincolnshire but may well have been relevant elsewhere. And is spot on in terms of the period of Harriet's baptism. Although the second baptism would seem not to support this possibility.

As at Whaplode, in other parts of the county children were brought to be baptised at the clergyman's house. The Revd. W.H. Apthorpe of Bicker described in 1849 how in that area it was 'the normal custom among the clergy..... to have them brought to the house or the church and baptising, without requiring the aid of sponsors.....'.<sup>8</sup> The form of private baptism was also used in church and because it did not require the presence of godparents this raised problems for the clergyman anxious to combat dissent in his parish. Dissenters with objections to the practice of having godparents could dispense with them by only having private baptism administered. The Revd. John Otter's comments on the way this was done at Ranby are also relevant for the light they throw on registration practices, for he found 'that many dissenters have taken advantage of this irregularity to get their children entered in the register without bringing them to be received into the Church.....', when godparents would have been necessary.



St Clement's Church Leigh 1848



St John the Baptist Southend 1848

## CORRECTION

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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In the Secretary's report in issue 52 heralding the Letters from Leigh book it was incorrectly stated that the letters were from Canon King to his mother—they are in fact from his mother to the good Canon when a young man.