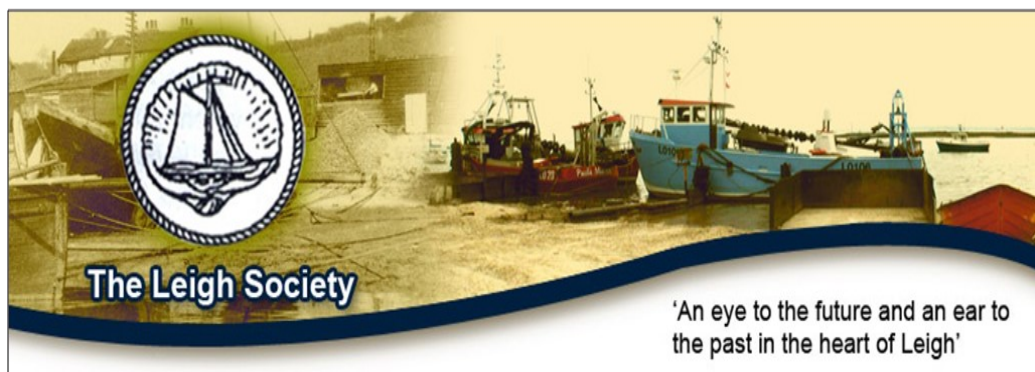


LEIGHWAY ISSUE 55 NEW YEAR 2018



CONTENTS

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

2018 Here we come/
Joy Dalwin/ Subs/Diary Dates

TWIG IT No 1/Twig it No 2

2018 Speaker Biographies

Keeping eyes on the River

Keeping London Going /Coffee and Crackers

Then and Now/Dreams of a Misspent Youth or just Jazzing Around

Rev Shaw—The Missionary

The Great Storm of 1987—
A casualty

1
2
3
4
5
6
7-8
8

2018 HERE WE COME

Here we go for another year of interest, information, fun and friendship. We are going to be looking at our programmes and events to see how we can make them even more interesting and entertaining and we would welcome suggestions from you , so don't be shy, let us have your pearls of wisdom!!!



JOY DALWIN

It is a great shame that we start the year by reporting the passing of Joy Dalwin, a long time member and steward at the Heritage Centre. Little Joy, as we all knew her, was indeed a joy to know. Always with a ready wit and view on the world. She stewarded in the Centre for many years with the late Jean Jordan and even when she packed it in she could still be seen in the Old Town where she came for her beloved prawn roll from Osbornes. She was always out and about in the town and those of us she chatted with along the way will greatly miss her.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A reminder that the new subs are £12 per household which is extremely good value and less than many other organisations. For those of you who pay by standing order, we are looking to revising this to a direct debit later in the year as this will help with annual renewals. Members will be notified of the changes in due course. As there are a considerable number of members who have paid for 2018 at the old rate we would be most grateful if you could let the Society have the difference of £2. The increase is necessary to help us maintain the Society and the Heritage Centre. Also if you would like to receive your Leighway by email please email Carole.

2018 DIARY DATES

Our March talk will be at Wesley Methodist, Elm Road starting at 7.30pm. —THIS ONLY RELATES TO THE MARCH MEETING. Thereafter meetings will be at the COMMUNITY CENTRE IN ELM ROAD - PARKING AT REAR. Entry £2 members £3 visitors

21 March - Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela — Bishop Stephen Cottrell

11 April AGM —Elm Road—A Moment in Time—Carole Mulroney

24 April—Visit to Hyde Hall*

12 May—Visit to Apsley House and Marble Arch*

16 May— Lost Eastwood—Kiti Theobald

13 June—Palace Theatre and Cliffs Pavilion —Sophie Lander

12 September— Battlefield Essex—John Debenham and Andrew Summers

10 October—History of Canals—Bob Delgano

14 November - Essex Fire Brigade Museum

* see enclosed posters

TWIG IT NO 1

Fed up with the bad press Two Tree Island gets our own Clive Webster, a local River Thames Warden, and Carole Mulroney are working together with the various stakeholders on the Island to improve the situation.

Thus came about TWIG, the TWo Tree Island Group.

On the ground, TWIG comprises a small army of volunteers representing all the Island's user groups. Meanwhile, the stakeholder side comprises those who can directly influence or effect change, namely, Borough Councillors and officers, Veolia, the Police and Essex Wildlife Trust. This is the first time that Two Tree stakeholders have met in this way so it is definitely a step in the right direction.

The Group has already discussed the problem issues and will in future be looking at ways to enhance the Island whilst keeping it a haven for wildlife and birds alongside passive recreational uses.

Southend Beachcare and Make Southend Sparkle have been running very well-attended litter picks on the Island and Leigh Marshes and anyone interested in joining them can find out more on <https://www.facebook.com/southendbeachcare/>. There will also be dog awareness days and other events to bring the community together to look after this beautiful area.

While there will always be litter bugs, fly-tippers and careless dog walkers who leave their black bags to litter the place, there are things we all can do to alleviate these problems. For instance, if you spot any fly tipping or wish to report a street cleansing or dog bin issue you can use the website <http://www.southend.gov.uk/MySouthend> where your views can be submitted anonymously.

TWIG IT NO 2

The following article appeared in Leighway No 45.

JUMPING THE SHOTGUN?

On the 18 March 1736 Stephen Church of Leigh married Elizabeth Cadman, also of Leigh. Nothing remarkable in that except that Stephen's first wife, Mary, did not die until after this date and was buried in Leigh on 27 April 1736. So how did he get away with it?

Well Stephen and Elizabeth took part in what is known as a clandestine marriage in London. The wedding took place in the Fleet Prison. The requirements were loose to say the least. Grooms could be as young as 14 and brides 12. The bride and groom needed only to give their consent to the union for it to be recognized. Clergy and witnesses were not necessary, though they were often present to provide proof that the marriage had taken place. Prisons like the Fleet and the King's Bench were popular for couples interested in quick, no questions-asked nuptials because of the number of clerics imprisoned for debt who had nothing to lose and welcomed the income. Edward Ashwell was the officiating minister, who is described in the records as a 'thorough rogue and vagabond'. So was the marriage legal in any event?

Reading the story again I suddenly twigged my mistake.

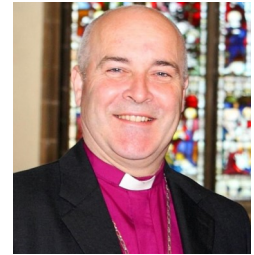
Before we used the present day Julian Calendar our years ran under the Gregorian Calendar from April to March. So when Mary died in April 1736 her death was actually 11 months before the March of Stephen's second marriage but both are recorded as 1736.

1752 began on 1 January. To align the calendar in use in England to that on the continent, the Gregorian calendar was adopted: and the calendar was advanced by 11 days: Wednesday 2 September 1752 was followed by Thursday 14 September 1752. The year 1752 was thus a short year (355 days). There was much consternation and social upheaval as people felt they had lost 11 days from their lives.

2018 SPEAKERS

STEPHEN COTTRELL, BISHOP OF CHELMSFORD PILGRIMAGE TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

On 21 March **Bishop Stephen** will be speaking at **WESLEY METHODIST** about his pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain.



CAROLE MULRONEY— ELM ROAD

At our AGM on 11 April at the **COMMUNITY CENTRE** Carole will talk on Elm Road and the people who were living there in 1911, where they came from, where they went to and what they got up to.

KITI THEOBALD— LOST EASTWOOD

Our speaker on 16 May at the **COMMUNITY CENTRE** will be Kiti Theobald, local writer and folk singer who describes herself as a bit of a jack-of-all-trades! Her illustrated talk “Lost Eastwood”, is also the title of her book which she says came about because of the threat from the airport, really, as well as the fact that Henry Smith, a farmer from Edward’s Hall had a lot of information from an exhibition held at the Millennium, and there was an opportunity to enhance the church funds. She will be including a little of that relationship in her talk, as he was a very interesting man. Kiti lived in Eastwood as a child and attended the original Eastwood School, then moved away, but came back to Eastwood 51 years ago!



SOPHIE LANDER—THE PALACE THEATRE AND CLIFFS PAVILION



On 13 June, we welcome Sophie Lander who will give us an insight into the history and work of the Palace Theatre and Cliffs Pavilion.

Sophie joined Southend Theatres at the beginning of 2017 and manages a well-established Community & Education Programme across both theatres. The programme involves youth theatre groups, writers’ groups, workshops, backstage tours and community talks, as well as work in a number of other areas. She has always had a passion for theatre and graduated from the University of Winchester with a BA Hons in Performing Arts and Psychology. Community Arts has always been the focus of her work and working at Southend Theatres in Community and Education is a dream role.



JOHN DEBENHAM AND ANDREW SUMMERS BATTLEFIELD ESSEX



12 September. Born in Romford, John has been a resident of Leigh for the last 55 years. On retirement from engineering, he took a BA History degree followed by an MA in Intellectual History, studying ‘Civilisation and Barbarism’ and continues to enjoy historical research. A member of Southend Poetry Society he writes poetry and short stories with longer works in “perpetual progress”.

Born within the sound of Bow Bells on a quiet day, Andrew has lived for the last 30 years in Hadleigh and been married to Glenis for 50 years. He has printed books, bought books, sold books in the UK and abroad and now writes and publishes books through Essex Hundred Publications. Separately Andrew has edited “The Numbers Had to Tally”, a Second World War survival story and written “They Did Their Duty, Essex Farm” which tells the story of Essex Farm in Belgium and its connections with the Essex Regiment. His latest work “The Last Flight of L33 and other stories from 1914 – 1918” is available as an e-book.

The writing collaboration of John and Andrew began about 14 years ago and the brand “Essex Hundred” was born. Since then they have written seven books concerning various aspects of the history of our county.

KEEPING EYES ON THE RIVER

How clean is our River Thames? It's a question that taxes the minds of many. There's no doubt things have improved since 1858 and the days of the Great Stink - Joseph Bazalgette's amazing sewer system saw to that - but how much progress has been made in modern times?

The recent £20m fines levied against Thames Water for discharging millions of gallons of untreated sewerage in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire suggests not a lot. Indeed, whenever there is rainfall in excess of 2.2 mms somewhere there is run off of raw sewage from our overworked storm drains. That is because our Victorian sewage system was built only to accommodate a projected population of 4.5 million people, not the present 8.6 million; and while a new Tideway Tunnel is in progress to relieve the pressure, this will not be completed until 2023.

So in real terms, not as clean as it could be. Furthermore, in defining cleanliness we should not just take the quality of the water in isolation. We should also factor in the abundance or otherwise of sea life and litter, because the river attracts all kinds of debris, pollutants and microplastics as it makes its way to the sea. If my personal experiences are anything to go by, the Thames is carrying more rubbish than any other period I can recall. In the last six months, we have been concentrating our efforts on one site in Essex: Grays Beach. Here, we remove over a thousand items of litter every month and if anything it is getting worse. And it's a similar story elsewhere along other stretches of the river, notably Tilbury, Purfleet and Rainham.

And it's all because of our lifestyles. We live in a plastic -wrapped, instantly disposable, materialistic world, where we are too lazy to recycle and think it's okay to flush our rubbish down the loo or dump it in the drink. We are drowning in plastic. More damning is the fact that we have no excuse. Our ancestors were ill-informed and ill-educated about the global environment (though they did know about their local landscape) but we do it fully cognisant of the fact that plastic is virtually indestructible; releasing toxins and taking over 400 years to degrade by which time our rivers and seas will be destroyed.

One thing that confuses the issue is that measures of cleanliness can be relative. One stretch of the river may be very different from another and there are seasonal variations to factor in - to say nothing of the impact of global warming, tides and turbulent storms. In order to get a broader picture, the Environmental Agency has strategically positioned sensors along stretches of the river Thames. These give readings in real-time and provide an instant update on pollution levels for mariners, fishermen and other river users.



So while the matter of cleanliness is best left to marine biologists and academics to wrangle over help is on hand for us local enthusiasts. Every month, Thames 21 trains small groups of volunteers to be citizen scientists. Their goal is to encourage people to take readings at regular intervals and report back their findings. Measurement indicators include river temperature, level of oxygen, ph, turbidity and coliforms as well as general comments about the particular stretch of shoreline they monitor.

No previous experience is required so with pen and clip board in hand I made my way to Hammersmith and a classroom laboratory. I learnt the rudiments of measuring, wielded a chemical kit on the shoreline and met other like-minded folk. A week later I had my first chance to use it down here. My initial impression was that taking a sample outside the classroom laboratory on a stretch of the river by Hammersmith is very different from taking it from the estuary; rather than a few yards of exposed mud to wade across, there could be over a mile of it. Fortunately I'd checked tides beforehand. Secondly, was a slightly self conscious feeling as I walked across the beach in my hi-viz jacket attracting curious gazes from bathers and sun worshippers alike. As I bent down to scoop out my sample I had to balance various phials of chemicals and mark off the measurements against the colour charts. Initial observations weren't great as a drift of brown foamy scum passed by the 'award-winning' Bell Wharf Beach, just a few yards from the shoreline. It turned out to be phytoplankton, a type of microscopic algae, which comes in on the tide, a familiar sight down here and not thought harmful, but enough, I suspect, to put people off. There were also sightings of dog faeces and owners seemed to gaily ignore the notices.

As I walked along the beach I also detected a large boneless, translucent shape with brown streaks bobbing in the shallows. It turned out to be a compass jellyfish, not a species I was familiar with. Apparently it was not deadly but fearsome enough to give a severe sting and not something you want to take away from a day's bathing. Then a more sinister finding when one test detected the presence of the coliform bacteria.

If this all sounds alarmist it isn't meant to be. I've swum in the river estuary all my life and I know there are many others like me. I will continue to do so - after all, the river is still one of the most pleasurable aspects of living in Leigh and its waters are generally warm, clear, safe...and most of the time clean. In that respect, they exceed those of many other parts of the British coastline. But from now on I will be more mindful of where and when I go.

Clive Webster

KEEPING LONDON GOING



This interesting picture shows Dutch Eel boats in Hole Haven Creek in 1914.

Dutch fishermen had continued to supply the City of London during the Great Fire of 1666 and as a reward, they were granted a monopoly on selling eels at Billingsgate. The Dutch eel boats were a distinctive feature of the Upper Pool, and remained as a fascinating curiosity until well into the 20th century, the last leaving their free moorings in 1938.

If you want to see more about the Dutch eelmen and their schuyts (boats) there is a great Pathe newsreel

of 1931 at <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/the-eel-men>

COFFEE AND CRACKERS—ELIMENTARY DR WATSON



Until the 1920s there was no Broadway West—it was the site and grounds of Leigh House the home of Dr Watson—eminent physician in Leigh. Dr Watson also dabbled in property and literally paved the way for Broadway West to be constructed and thus creating the triangle of roads and shopping area we know today.

So who was William Douglas Watson? Have you ever been to Dublin and sat in the palatial Bewleys Coffee Lounge in Grafton Street. Well Dr Watson's mother, Isabella Bewley, was the granddaughter of Samuel Bewley, who with his son, Charles, was the founder of Bewley's and the first to import tea to Ireland. From its origins in the tea trade the Bewley's business expanded into coffee importation, roasting and distribution and the operation of coffee shops, most notably the legendary Grafton Street Café, which was opened in 1927. Dr Watson's maternal grandmother was Dorothy Jacob, also Irish, and a cousin of William Beale Jacob, who in 1851, with his brother, Robert, started the Jacob's Biscuit business. Both the Bewley and the Jacob families were Quakers.

So next time you take the cheese platter with a Jacob's cracker with your post prandial coffee in Leigh you are carrying on a local connection.



THEN AND NOW



No 73 Broadway. William Joseph Ford was a baker from St Albans and not connected to the old Leigh Ford family. What a wonderful shopfront. Interestingly the advertisements around the window offer 'Bride Cakes' not 'Wedding Cakes'. In 1912 this shop was the Hygienic Bakery run by Janes & Sons.

So how did Bride Cakes become Wedding Cakes? In 1703 Thomas Rich, a baker's apprentice from Ludgate Hill, wanted to make his bride an extravagant cake, so he drew on St Bride's Church, on Fleet Street for inspiration.

Traditionally the bride would place a ring inside the couple's portion of the cake to symbolise acceptance of the proposal. During the mid-17th century to the beginning of the 19th, the "bride's pie" was served at most weddings. Bride's pie would evolve into the bride's cake. The bride cake was traditionally a plum or fruit cake.

The modern wedding cake originated at the 1882 wedding of Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany; his wedding cake was the first to actually be completely edible. Pillars between cake tiers did not begin to appear until about 20 years later. The pillars were very poorly made from broomsticks covered in icing. The tiers represented prosperity and were a status symbol because only wealthy families could afford to include them in the cake.

DREAMS OF A MISSPENT YOUTH OR JUST JAZZING AROUND

If you haven't been there yet, go to the new Jazz Centre at the lower ground of the Beecroft Gallery in Victoria Avenue, Southend. For all jazz fans it is a little goldmine of memorabilia and archives. The Centre is open every Saturday and Thursday from 10am to 4.30pm and is there to promote, preserve and celebrate the vibrant culture of jazz music in the UK and beyond. The Centre helps bring jazz to the community through workshops, concerts, research collections, the promotion of current jazz scene and the preservation of jazz history.

Right now Rita Lilley, a lifelong, jazz fanatic, is researching Kenny Ball and His Jazz Band—an Essex lad we all remember. Kenny played at the Cliffs Pavilion in October 1969 and in that same year wrote a song which shows he must have known Leigh well. It is all about Ivy Osborne's Cackle Stall in the Old Town. The song is not his best and is only a B side but the Jazz Centre has a copy and is transcribing the words. Another little piece of Leigh's history which I am hoping we can get a copy of for the archives.

Rita is also eager to find old devotees of the Lulu-belle Snackbar which was at 103 Rectory Grove and which apparently stayed open all night!!! Anyone with any memories/pictures of Lulu-belles or the jazz scene generally over the years in Leigh please get in touch with Carole and she will connect you to Rita.

REV GEORGE SHAW—THE MISSIONARY

In a quiet corner of Leigh Cemetery on the London Road is a monument to Rev George A Shaw of Madagascar.



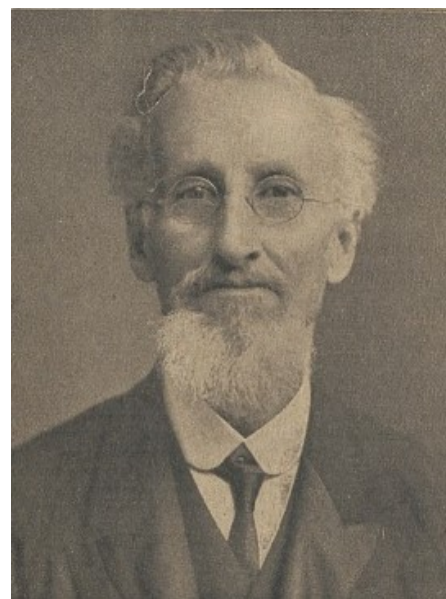
Well wouldn't you be intrigued?

Rev Shaw died in 1917 aged 74 and had been living at Sunnyside, Chalkwell Gardens (part of Leigh Road which no longer goes by that name).

In 1911 he is recorded as a Retired Foreign Missionary with the London Missionary Society.

There is nothing else on the grave which gives any indication of his life and works—but oh what a story it was!

George Andrew(s) Shaw was born in the Clerkenwell district of London in 1843.



It has proven difficult to find information on his early life but he appears to have been the son of Thomas George Shaw, a wholesale merchant from Scotland and his wife Mary. The family are found in St Pancras in 1851 and Islington ten years later where George is recorded as a merchant's clerk. Sometime in the following years George became a missionary with the London Missionary Society and in 1865 married Emily Maria Prior from Woodford. And there the story would have ended, but George managed to get himself embroiled in an international incident which hit the papers in England and around the world.

The history of Madagascar is complicated but under King [Radama I](#) (1810–28), who was recognized by the British government as King of Madagascar and a treaty in 1817 with the British governor of Mauritius the slave trade was abolished in return for British military and financial assistance. Missionaries from the London Missionary Society began arriving in 1818 but under increasing pressure from the British and French to dominate political and cultural life of the Island Queen Ranaivalona I (1828–61) issued a royal edict prohibiting the practice of Christianity in Madagascar and pressuring most foreigners to leave the Island. Residents of Madagascar could accuse each other of various crimes, including theft, Christianity and especially witchcraft.

Succeeding his mother, Radama II (1861–63) attempted to relax the her stringent policies, but was overthrown by an alliance of *Andriana* (noble) and *Hova* (commoner) courtiers, who sought to end the absolute power of the monarch.

British consultants were employed to train and professionalize soldiers and Christianity was declared the official religion of the court in 1869. Legal codes were reformed on the basis of British common law and three European-style courts were established in the capital city and there was also success in defending Madagascar against several French colonial incursions.

Queen Victoria commented 'Are we to let the French go on taking what they like with impunity?' But the British government did not want to get involved.

In 1883 the French Minister of Marine and Colonies ordered Admiral Pierre, who commanded the Indian Ocean Division of the French Navy, to deploy ships to protect French assets in north western Madagascar. An ultimatum was then issued to Queen Ranaivalona II to recognise French Protectorate rights on the coast, guarantee the right to property ownership to French landholders and pay a million francs to France. If she didn't agree the Admiral was ordered to bombard and capture Tamatave and establish French rights forcefully.

PTO

The response to this ultimatum led Admiral Pierre's warships to open fire. The city was occupied the next day but this opened up a can of worms between the French and British on the Island. The arrest and imprisonment of the missionary, Rev George Shaw, was on such incident.

Rev Shaw had quarters in Tamatave running a medical dispensary. On 14 June French soldiers were sent to guard his house. Rev Shaw was not there but the soldiers found bottles which appeared to contain claret in the courtyard of the house which they swiftly drank and then fell ill. The men were stopped from drinking more and the remaining bottles smashed save one kept for analysis.

When Rev Shaw got home he was immediately arrested on a charge of poisoning the French soldiers. Shaw was imprisoned on board a French ship and denied communication with the outside world for 45 days.

The charge against Shaw was aiding the local government by hiding them from the French in Tamatave and generally being anti-French.

After considerable correspondence and newspaper coverage as well as debate in the House, the case against him was dropped and he was released with an offer of 1000 francs compensation from the French Government.

This and other incidents caused uproar in Parliament and Queen Victoria commented that by keeping its distance the British Government had not acted in a 'proper spirit of chivalrous honour.

But what of Mrs Shaw during this traumatic time?

Well she wrote a letter to the Governor of Mauritius asking for assistance. She wrote that her husband had been 3 years at Tamatave and 8 years previously elsewhere in Madagascar. Mrs Shaw had come out with other missionaries on HMS Taymouth Castle to find her husband incarcerated. She sought an interview with Admiral Pierre only to be met by one of his officers, and requested to see and stay with her husband or at Tamatave while he was imprisoned. She stated that her information was that some time before the French attacked some of their personal native friends, teachers in the school and pastors in the congregation under his charge, left a quantity of property in her husband's care, believing it would be safe as he was a British subject and as Rev Shaw had been made president of a committee of safety that had been formed to protect life and property from pillage and incendiarism.

Her requests were denied.

Following his release and returning to England Rev Shaw recuperated from his ordeal and began to tell his story to vast crowds.

By 1901 he was living in Vassall Road, Lambeth but later moved to Pembury Road, Westcliff and later Sunnyside, Chalkwell Gardens where he died in 1917.

THE GREAT STORM 1987

Having just past the 30th anniversary of the Great Storm here is a very vivid reminder of the damage it caused in Leigh by courtesy of the Southend Echo photographic archive.

A chimney forming a bridge between 2 roofs in Leigh Hill.

If you visit the Heritage Centre you can see a large section of one of the two cedars which once stood in the Library Gardens and was lost in the storm. Its rings verify its age as planted by John Loten in the 1790s.



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**

© Leigh Society, Leigh Heritage Centre, 13A High Street, Leigh -on-Sea SS9 2EN