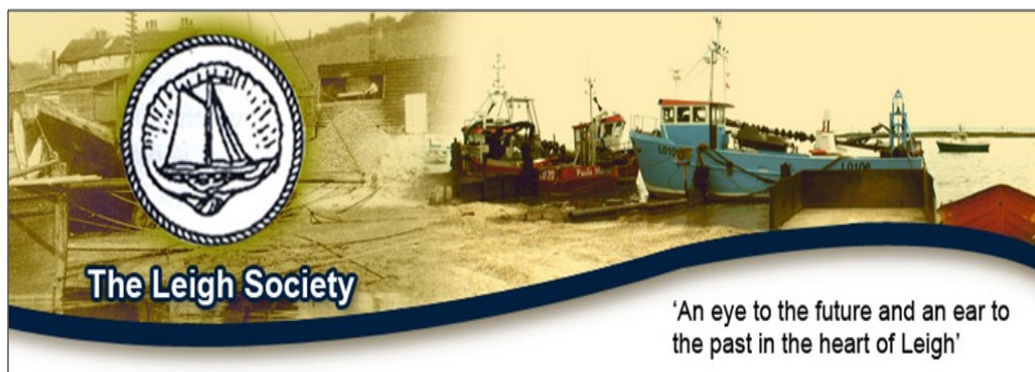


# LEIGHWAY

## ISSUE 58

## AUTUMN

## 2018



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

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### DUMMY RUN!

Trevor Cocks, our speaker on 8 May 2019, needs a tailor's dummy to illustrate his talk. Does anyone have one they could lend us for the evening?

### YEAR END REPORT

As you know last year we increased our subscriptions to help with the ongoing costs of running the Society, producing Leighway and running events. The Society has a lot of responsibilities in managing the Heritage Centre and Plumbs Cottage and we have carried out quite a bit of work there over the year and we are ever grateful for your support.

Anyway to cut a long story short, you could help us even more at no extra cost if you were to convert your subscription to a standing order. Many members already do this and it saves greatly on administration and sending out reminders which we really don't like to do.

So with this edition of Leighway we are sending everyone a standing order form for completion and submission to your Bank and hope that as many of you as possible will take advantage of this facility which of course also means you don't have to worry about cheques and renewals and your don't lose continuity in getting your Leighway and other information about our work. For those who already use this facility and have not changed the payment to £12 this is a gentle reminder. If you could do this before the new year that would be really helpful.

We are also taking steps to comply with data protection and all members will be getting a letter for them to sign as they have no doubt received from other organisations. Your help in completing and returning this would be appreciated. As part of the new rules our privacy policy is on the website [www.leighsociety.com](http://www.leighsociety.com).

### 2018 DIARY DATES

Our meetings (marked with \*) are held at the **COMMUNITY CENTRE IN ELM ROAD - PARKING AT REAR**. Entry £2 members, £3 visitors, commencing at 7.30pm

14 November - Essex Fire Brigade Museum\*

30 November—Leigh Lights

8 December—5 pm Carols on Strand Wharf

### 2019 DIARY DATES—ADVANCE NOTICE

13 March — Early Canvey Island—Robert Hallman\*

17 April—AGM and Hatch, Match, Scratch and Dispatch — Carole Mulroney\*

8 May — The Home Guard—Local Defence—Trevor Cocks\*

11 September—TBA

9 October TBA

13 November—TBA



## HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED

**TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,**  
*By W. Clegg,*  
 As the Crooked Billet Inn, on Wednesday, June 18,  
 1851, at Four o'Clock,  
**A** Timber-built COTTAGE, adjoining the Peter  
 Boat Inn, with frontage next the street, con-  
 taining two down-stair rooms, two front and two back  
 chambers, two kitchens, pantries, and yard to ditto:  
 let to a good tenant at £8 per annum. Close to good  
 water; there is a thoroughfare to the Back-street.  
 It is copyhold of the manor of Leigh Hall. Land-tax  
 4s. 2d.; a small quit-rent.  
 Particulars and Conditions at the time of sale.—May  
 be viewed any day prior to the same.



## A PUB BY ANY OTHER NAME

Many of you will have lamented the change of name of the Carlton Hotel to the Broadway a few years ago—the loss of tradition and the concession to the modern world which seems in many instances to be change for change's sake.

We have all seen the awfully named Slug and Lettuces over the country and a few years ago one Old Town pub looked set to follow this trend.

The Smack, for that is what it will always be known as to local people, was set to become Ye Oldie Smugglers—I ask you!!!! Well it didn't, but we still couldn't shake off the 'Ye Oldie' tag unfortunately so that now it bears that nomenclature. But even that change was not the first for this old inn.

In 1838 the Essex Herald advertised an auction to be held at The Shoreham Smack, Leigh, of the pub itself, its owner, Samuel Fairchild, having disposed of the business. Samuel had also been the owner of the Ship in Leigh at one time.

The Smack or Shoreham Smack of Samuel's day was the predecessor to the current pub which was built in 1852. The original building was on the other side of the High Street but demolished when the railway came through.

The Old Smack was recorded in the Court Rolls as the residence of John Flower, one of the Leigh Mariners. In 1691 he sold it to Sarah Goodlad, the daughter of Capt John Bundocke and wife of Richard Goodlad. Richard died at sea in 1649 when Sarah became owner. Included in the property was a quay across the street and open ground used for boat building.

## THEN AND NOW

Obviously an additional storey was added at some time but it is still clear to see the original building which is now Irma's restaurant was once Davenport's Pork Butchers.



As Davenport's it was No1 Elm Road but Irma's is now No 5.

In 1933 the butchers was run by Clifford Frederick Davenport but he had gone by 1939.

As Elm Road was renumbered in the mid 20s when Broadway West was built

this picture would date from around that time.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY DEAR LIBRARY



Leigh Library stands a proud and much loved building in Broadway West. This large mock Tudor style house was built as the Rectory in 1838 by the Rector of Leigh, Rev Robert Eden, who subsequently became Bishop of Moray and Ross and Primus of Scotland, using money raised from the sale of fixtures and fittings from the old rectory and supplemented with money from a legacy.

Broadway West did not exist in 1838 and so the front of the house faced the church. The porch and impressive front door were later removed to the north of the building, with the coat of arms of the Diocese of London above.

Originally on the north side, were the yard, kitchen and out buildings. The water for the house came from a well in the yard, the site of which is just to the right of the gatepost. At that time there were three floors to the Rectory with bedrooms for the servants on the top floor. Although this floor was later removed, the original windows can be seen in the present Children's library.

The main area of the current library was divided into three rooms, the Rector's study was the middle room with the bay window, the room on the right hand corner facing the garden was the lounge and the dining room was at the far end.

The first public library in Leigh was opened in 1919 in the Distributing Centre, which is now the police station. In 1926 the Borough Council agreed to purchase the Rectory and convert it to a library with the ground to the south being preserved as open space. Two years later on 9 October 1928 the present library was opened. The occasion was commemorated by a bronze plaque on the porch which still exists.

The new library held a stock of 8,500 books and a reading room was established on the first floor. 177,000 books were issued in the first year and this rose to 237,000 the following year. The Library Gardens were opened to the public in June 1930 and their beauty enhanced the lovely old building.

A few years ago we fought very hard to save our Library and it brought home to people how important it was for the life of the town. We now have a volunteer group who regularly do a tidy up of the Gardens as a joint initiative between the Borough and Town Councils who hope to carry out works to enhance them for the future. If you would like to take part please contact Leigh Town Council 01702 716288 for information.

The shed in the east of the gardens has just received planning permission for conversion to a public building. This will allow the building to be used for promotions, events, demonstrations and meetings. This use has been promoted by the North Thames Fisheries Local Action Group which is working in Leigh and North Thames with the aim of ensuring that we retain a sustainable fishing and cockling industry and active port.

So this year our Library celebrates a triple birthday—190 years since it was built, 90 years since it opened as a library and 80 years since the sensory garden was installed.

## THE KENTISH INVASION

In September 1724 100 smacks with 500 men from Queenborough and Faversham, led by the Mayor of Queenborough and their local MP (an oyster dredger) made a raid on the Leigh oyster beds. It is reported that they invaded with flags flying and the firing of guns and carried off some thousands of bushels of oysters. They were under the illusion that the beds they took from were common ground so the oysters were there for the taking. They sent their plunder to London and caused a glut in the oyster market and a drop in prices.

The Leigh men weren't going to take this lying down and 3 law suits were brought. In the biggest William Hutton sued the MP and 14 others for the theft of 12000 bushels of oysters and destruction of oyster spawn. Claiming £17000 in losses. That's over 3.5 million in today's money. He won and was awarded £2000 damages and costs. The other suits were also won by the Leigh men and in total the Kent fisherman had to pay £7000 which took them 20 years.



## **ELIJAH RISBY THE COMPASSIONATE SHRIMPER**

In October 1876 Elijah Risby was out shrimping near the Red Buoy off Leigh when he picked up an object which turned out to be a dead body, very badly decomposed and partially devoid of flesh.

He brought the body home to Leigh and after investigation it was found to be the body of a young sailor by the name of William Page who had fallen from his barge on 8 September between the Blyth and Chapman lighthouses.

Somehow the boy's parents were able to identify him. A reward had been posted after the accident and this was offered to Elijah. He declined to take the money as he could see the poor condition of the parents and no doubt did not want to add to their sorrow and circumstances.

An inquest was held at the Bell public house and a verdict of accidental death was recorded. However the jury took the opportunity to stress how important it was in their opinion that life buoys should be carried on all such craft.

It had been quite an eventful week in the Risby family for in the same paper and page there is a report of Elijah's cousin, Samuel Field, having an accident on Victoria Wharf when he was unloading pipes.

## **MERCHANT NAVY DAY, 3 SEPTEMBER**

Members of the Leigh Society taking part in Leigh Town Council's ceremony to honour our merchant seamen and fishermen on Strand Wharf.



## **CARD CARRYING CUSTOMERS**

The Heritage Centre now takes all credit (except American Express) and debit cards for payment of purchases on the premises.

This is a major step forward and came about because of the number of times we were being asked about card purchases and were unable to carry these out and thus losing sales.

The Heritage Centre is heavily dependant on its sales to ensure its upkeep and maintenance so this major leap into the 21st century will hopefully improve the finances and keep us going for many more years.

## SPEAKERS 2019

### ROBERT HALLMAN – EARLY CANVEY ISLAND 13 MARCH 2019

“I came to this country aged 21 in pursuit of my training as a typesetter – Germany, Holland, South Wales, Watford, and Dublin. On my return I stopped in London on a whim and sought and found a job in the West End as typographer, liked it and stayed on, went freelancing after just a few years, bought a house in South Benfleet and settled in Essex with a young family. I also loved photography and I illustrated books on Britain, antiques, falconry, etc.



As a teenager I had decided I wanted to write, but I had to wait until retirement to make that dream come true and I knew enough to glean the confidence. Evening classes, diligent research and magazine and newspaper articles followed. My first book was a history of South Benfleet, then Canvey Island, Essex, Chelmsford and Thundersley & Daws Heath. I found a local publisher for a children’s story set on the Essex coast in the 18th century, a time I had studied especially while researching. Two collections of Ghost Stories and a collection of poetry and photographs I shared with a friend – ‘The East Seaxe’. All my written books have been about Essex, though my next one will revisit my childhood in wartime.

I’m still writing and adding to a series of historical fables or tales set in, on and about the Thames – I like to call them Legends. One of them, set on the Leigh foreshore, has already been published in Moscow of all places. Now I’m just trying to interest a publisher to produce a book of pictures with captions of Essex in black and white. “

### CAROLE MULRONEY HATCH, MATCH, SCRATCH AND DISPATCH 17 APRIL 2019

As many of you will know Carole has been researching her own and Leigh’s family history for many years and currently has a database of over 24,000 people who are connected, not just to each other, but to Leigh.

In this talk Carole will explain how the records she uses came about and some interesting snippets about Leigh.



### TREVOR COCKS – THE HOME GUARD LOCAL DEFENCE 8 MAY 2019

Trevor is a member of the Hertfordshire Home Guard Living History Group. “The Group of 16 people is based at Hatfield, Hertfordshire, and we portray the Home Guard from its inception in May 1940 to its stand down in December 1944. As a group we attend about 10 to 12 living history shows in Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridge, Northants, Buckinghamshire and Essex. Also Crossing Temple at War Show in Braintree.

I am a resident of Leigh, and over the last 12 months I have given talks at the Rayleigh Museum and spoken to 50 year six pupils from Rayleigh Primary Schools in Rayleigh library. More information can be found at the website Hertfordshire Homeguard”.



## KIWIS WITH A CANDLE

What a delight to be in the Heritage Centre when 2 visitors from New Zealand arrived. Teresa Ellis was originally a local but went to New Zealand many years ago.

It was even better to find that Teresa's mother, who still lives locally, had actually donated an artefact for Plumbs Cottage in the form of a candle holder. Here are Teresa and her partner with said candle holder in Plumbs.

## HERITAGE CENTRE HELP

We are delighted to report that for the first time any of us can remember the Heritage Centre has been manned every day during August and September. This is a great achievement and many thanks goes out to all the stewards who give their time each week. However, we cannot sit back on our laurels and we need to maintain this coverage and expand the stewards rota..

With the winter months coming on we realise that we can't manage 7 day opening all the time, so now is the time to plan ahead and seek to recruit new stewards for the future.

To enable those who are interested to think about it and perhaps pass on to interested friends these are some pointers.

Potential helpers should be aware that unless they can get to the Centre on foot, parking is tight in the Old Town but there are pay car parks nearby—unfortunately we have no designated parking.

All of our stewards are required to be members of the Society (£12pa) and to be willing to familiarise themselves with the exhibits and a background to the history of Leigh. You don't have to be experts as you can always pass on specific questions to one of the team, but you do need to be able to answer general questions. We suggest all potential stewards read *Old Leigh* by H N Bride as a background for the history. We will ensure that new stewards shadow an existing steward for a period to start with.

On the practical side you need to be able to use a till and card pay machine for which training will be given. Accuracy is important in our accounting and you would be responsible for cashing up at the end of the day. Part of the fun and purpose of the Centre is to chat with visitors about Leigh and to make them feel welcome, so you need to be comfortable with talking to strangers.

Our core hours are 11 to 4. If you are interested please contact [leighsociety@btinternet.com](mailto:leighsociety@btinternet.com) or 01702 470834.

## PLANNING - AAARGH

One of the remits of the Society is to review all planning applications in our four conservation areas and significant applications outside those areas. We don't report to you on all of them because there are just too many and most are small scale. However, there are applications which raise significant issues for the town and we have all seen the articles and comment in local press about some of the more contentious ones.

It is important for all of us to understand that the planning system is not black and white and just not liking something is not a reason for it to be refused. Planning is a creature of policy and legislation so sometimes it is not possible to prevent a proposal going through because it fits with policy or is within the law. Every application has to be considered on its own merits and of course one man's meat is another man's poison so it is sometimes difficult to reconcile differing views.

Our views are reported to Southend Borough Council and taken into account in their consideration of applications. The Town Council also responds to all applications. And you can attend Town Council Planning meetings and speak if you feel strongly about an application. You all have a right to respond to the Borough Council on applications that affect you personally or the wider town. But make sure your arguments are based on planning grounds .

## RADIO TIMES

Over the last couple of months the Heritage Centre has featured twice on BBC Essex and Carole has been able to give information on air to boost our profile.

Firstly the Sadie 9 show was doing a spot about invasions and we were able to bring her up to speed with the Kentish invasion which is mentioned elsewhere in Leighway.

More recently the Sunday morning Essex Quest Programme has featured the Centre with one of its clues and we were paid a visit by Liana and Baz and were able to give more information about the Centre and the work we do.

How they got here I don't know given the clue but here it is and the explanation.

**Whispering Death used transportation with runners. A blue plaque scheme is the focus.**

**The explanation was:**

Whispering Death is the nickname for the former West Indies fast bowler, Michael H-OLD-ing.

Transportation with runners could be a s-LEIGH.

English HERITAGE operates a blue plaque scheme in London.

Someone who is the focus might be the CENTRE of attention.



On air in the Centre

## SPREADING THE WORD



Sally, Dec and Carole at the Essex Society for Family History Fair at Galleywood Heritage Centre.

Joined by groups from all over Essex and also from Suffolk and Hertfordshire and even Canada we had a very enjoyable and rewarding day.

Family history is big business and with the huge membership of the ESFH the day always promised to be busy and it was. We had a number of people who had connections to Leigh come and talk to us and bring their reminiscences and Carole was able to help quite a few with their Leigh family history research.

We also joined with the British Legion, Leigh Town Council and Blade Education at the Poppy Launch and Great War Day at the Community Centre where our Great War displays about Leigh and its servicemen was on display and Carole and others presented talks on relevant subjects.

We realise that we have to get out into the world and not just cocoon ourselves in the Heritage Centre—there is so much interest and history out there and we need to spread the word about Leigh.

So please, if through your groups and connections, you hear of any events where it would be appropriate for us to take part or if they are looking for a speaker to talk about Leigh please let us know at [leighsociety@btinternet.com](mailto:leighsociety@btinternet.com)

## WHO LIVED IN ELM ROAD IN 1911– PART 2 THE MAN FROM THE MANSE

In 1911 the Manse in Elm Road next to Wesley Methodist Church had just been built and was first occupied by the Rev William John Gregory Bestall. He was the second minister of Wesley Church joining the congregation in 1910.

The Rev Bestall came from Devon and had worked for the church in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). In 1887 he was appointed to the Tamil Mission in South Ceylon and began the first industrial school and later an orphanage to provide a home and better prospects for destitute boys who would be educated and found jobs in local mills.



On his return to England the Rev Bestall moved around London, Kent and Essex until settling for his term at Leigh in 1910.

This picture below shows the Rev Bestall with John Osborne, a great benefactor of Wesley Methodist, at a gathering in the gardens of Leigh House. The elderly gentleman with the beard in the front row next to Rev Bestall is Ref G Shaw who you may recall from a recent Leighway as the missionary to Madagascar.



Rev Bestall's nephew, Alfred Edmeades Bestall, was the creator of Rupert the Bear and wrote and illustrated his adventures in the Daily Express for over 30 years. He also did cartoons for Punch and watercolours for Tatler.

So you could say that Leigh's Rev Bestall was Rupert's uncle.

PS is that our dear Donald Fraser on the left of the cartoon?

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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