

# LEIGHWAY

## ISSUE 67

### WINTER

## 2022



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Please send items for next Leighway to carole.mulroney@btinternet.com By 31 March 2022	

**YOUR 2022 SUBSCRIPTION IS NOW DUE (UNLESS YOU PAY BY STANDING ORDER). THE RATE IS £12 PER HOUSEHOLD.**

**THE SOCIETY NEEDS TO KNOW IT CAN COUNT ON YOUR SUPPORT SO PLEASE SEND YOUR SUBS TO MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY, 16 AGNES AVENUE, LEIGH-ON-SEA SS9 3XS BY 31 MARCH 2022.**

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE A STANDING ORDER FORM FOR FUTURE YEARS PLEASE ASK CAROLE AT THE USUAL EMAIL ADDRESS**

### SIR DAVID AMESS MP



It was with terrible shock and disbelief that we witnessed the scenes and the aftermath of the murder of our MP, Sir David Amess. How could this happen in Leigh?

Well it did and we are left with a great sense of loss for a very good constituency MP and a strong supporter of many local organisations, not least the Leigh Society and Heritage Centre.

David had been a Vice President of the Society for many years and was always supportive and available and visited regularly.

With his love for all things cultural and of Southend itself, he was always an avid advocate for City status for the Borough and it is so sad to have that happen as a direct result of his death. But it is a legacy that we need to grasp and make sure it happens well and with all the bravado and cheeriness he always displayed at events. Camera at the ready for that all important shot, making the scene a happy one for participants and organisers.

We will miss his support but he has left a great legacy that we can all be proud of.

May he rest in peace and our sincere condolences to Lady Julia and the family.

### THE LEIGH SOCIETY/LEIGH HERITAGE CENTRE GOING FORWARD

It will come as no surprise to many of you that the last 2 years have been incredibly tough for small organisations such as the Society and Heritage Centre.

So the Executive Committee and Trustees have been discussing (initially by Zoom, but now together) how we can pick ourselves up, dust ourselves down and ensure that we move forward into the future with a degree of certainty about where we are going, what we are doing and how we are serving Leigh and the wider community in terms of the conservation of the area and our historical heritage.

With your Leighway you will find a letter from the President of the Society and Company Secretary of the Heritage Centre, Cathy Cottridge, setting out proposals for a change in our set up and a programme going forward which will see us into the next years as we come out of pandemic and move back to whatever is the new normal. Please take the time to read the papers and return the slip so that we can get a clear view and hopefully move forward with all the exciting things we have in mind.

## MORE KINGS FOR THE KING FAMILY TREE—PART 1

BY ANN BROOKER

When I completed my story about Walker King's family for the book 'Letters from Leigh' I told how, through the marriage of James King, Dean of Raphoe to Ann Walker it brought Kings of England into the mix, starting with one of her ancestors, Margaret Clifford (1451-1567) whose 4 times Great Grandmother was Phillipa Plantagenet (1355-1381) who was the only legitimate child of Lionel Plantagenet, son of King Edward III. From there it went back in a direct male line to the mother of Henry II, Matilda (1102-1167), also known as Maud, the only surviving child of Henry I and then back to the ancestors of William the Conqueror.

That was where I left it for several years until I saw an episode of 'Who do you think you are?' when it rather made me cringe because the subject also had traced his line back to Phillipa Plantagenet etc. Hopefully he didn't think to look laterally as I did at that point. I couldn't let my King family think about that relationship although any new branch would obviously be connected! So, I decided to look at the various wives of our monarchs and see what other interesting things turned up in the way of ancestors.

Nothing very much excited me until I got back to Henry I, 2<sup>nd</sup> son of William the Conqueror. It was his wife who sparked great interest because of her parentage. I knew all about that, having a) been thoroughly taught about Shakespeare's 'McBeth' and b) the story of her mother which was serialised in the 'Girl' magazine of my teen years in the 1950s.

Henry's wife, baptised as Edith but better known as Matilda Dunkeld (1079-1118), was the daughter of King Malcolm III and his wife Margaret, an English princess. Matilda's father, Malcolm III (d 1093) had descended from Kenneth McAlpine or Kenneth I who became first king of Alba, (as Scotland was then known until the 13<sup>th</sup> century) having asserted his dominance over the other clan kings, until his death in 858 AD. Malcolm III had reigned from 1058 after the death of McBeth, who had succeeded Malcolm's father Duncan. Although that story is not quite as Shakespeare portrayed it in the 'Scottish Play'. Malcolm through his marriage to his second wife Margaret founded the Scottish dynasty which was to survive until the late 13<sup>th</sup> Century. Three of their sons became Kings of Alba.

It was Margaret, Malcolm's wife that got me excited and I knew I must write that up as it would please my Kings to know about her and her ancestry. She had been born about 1045 in Hungary to Edward the Exile (1016- 1057) and his wife Agatha. After the death of his father, Edmund Ironside at the Battle of Ashingdon, Edward and his brother, small children, were sent by the victor, Canute, to the Swedish Court, with instructions to the king to have the children murdered, but he, an old ally to their grandfather Ethelred the Unready, refused to do so and sent them to safety in Hungary where they were brought up. Edward the Exile spent most of his life in Eastern Europe until he was sent for by Edward the Confessor to become the next rightful heir as the Confessor had no children to succeed him.

Edward arrived in England in April 1057, with his wife and three children but a few days later, died and was buried in Old St Paul's, London. His family stayed on in England at the Confessor's court and his son Edgar, brother of Margaret, was declared King by the Witan after the Battle of Hastings but had no choice but to submit to William the Conqueror, before the end of that year and was present at the coronation of William.

In 1068 Edgar, his siblings, Margaret and Cristina and their mother Agatha fled to Northumbria. Legend has it that they embarked ship from there with a view of returning to the continent but were caught in a terrific storm which drove the ship to the Scottish coast where it was wrecked and the family landed up at the Court of King Malcolm III who gave them refuge. By the end of 1070 Margaret had married Malcolm.

The Hungarian Court where Margaret had grown up was extremely religious and she and her sister were very devout. In fact, Cristina became a nun at Romsey Abbey and later on, its Abbess until her death. Throughout her life Margaret made all those who wrote about her, describe her as exceedingly devout, with a pure and noble character. Well educated, she had a good and civilising influence on her husband, children and her subjects. She worked hard on reforming the church in Scotland making it conform to the latest teachings and practises of the Roman Catholic Church. She founded religious houses, particularly at



Just north of Edinburgh she established a ferry service across the Firth of Forth, as a short-cut for pilgrims going to St Andrews (the nearest crossing until then was miles away at Stirling) Since then the ferry ran from the little villages known as South & North Queensferry until 1964. She did much to alleviate the suffering of the poor and was much loved by her subjects. In her private life she was also very devout.

She died in 1093 on the 16 November, it is said of a broken heart, when she heard that her husband and their eldest son Edward had been killed in a battle against the English at Alnwick in Northumberland three days earlier.

For her piety, charity and work for ecclesiastical reform, in 1250 the Pope, Innocent IV canonized her and thereafter she has always been known as St Margaret of Scotland.

As to her paternal forebears, their names are well known in Anglo-Saxon history. There was Edmund Ironside who fought and eventually lost to Cnut or Canute as he is better known. Her great grandfather was Ethelred the Unready. Edward the Elder was her 4 times great-grandfather who with the help of his sister, Aethelflaed, the Lady of the Mercians, did much to win most of southern England from the Vikings. But it is their father, Margaret's 5 times great grandfather that is the most exciting – the only King of England to be known as Great—Alfred.



## SHOPPING MEMORIES

Local u3as (University of the Third Age) are getting together to put on a special display next year all about the local shops and the changes there have been over the years. Members are taking part in reminiscence groups and Oral History recordings will be passed on to the Sound Archive at Essex Record Office. Local history and photography groups will be contributing to a special display about the shops on Broadway, Rectory Grove, Elm Road and Leigh Road for September 2022.

Our shopping area in Leigh is unique and architecturally very attractive. We think it is important to record the history and celebrate the buildings. At the Heritage Centre we already have some photographs in the archives, which will be very helpful to the project, but we would welcome more.

If any member of the Leigh Society has any special memories, photographs we could copy or anything else relating to the shops in Leigh in past times the group would be very pleased to use them.

Please contact Jennifer Simpson at 01702 712922

## ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM DISPLAYS UPDATE

### Display in large glass cabinet

We have been offered a selection of the Prehistoric Flints found by Mark Peterson and David Carr in the fields around Hadleigh Castle and listed on the Portable Antiquities Scheme website. <https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/944416>

These are the tools our ancient ancestors used when nomadic tribal groups roamed our local area following animal herds during migration, hunting wildfowl on the marshes, feeding from the sea and shellfish. They would have visited over many years and in different seasons in the Mesolithic era, 6,000 to 12,000 years ago.

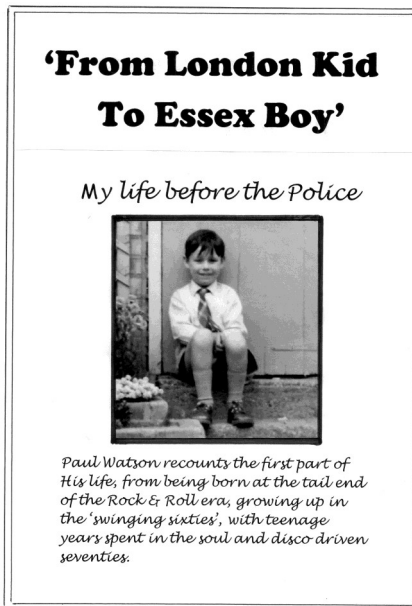
Look out for the display in the new year.

### Display Board

As it is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Leigh Society this year we will be creating a display about the origins of the Leigh Society.

## FROM LONDON KID TO ESSEX BOY

Extracts from the memoirs of Paul Watson of his life in the late 60s and 70s and the move from London to Cranleigh Drive.



My father's purchase of the house in Cranleigh Drive was completed towards the end of August 1969 and that September, I started at Belfairs High School For Boys, in Eastwood a few miles away, which was reasonably easy to get to by bus, bicycle or walking.

What was great about living at the Cranleigh Drive house was that I had myself a good sized bedroom. My mother took on part time jobs, at the Co-Op in Leigh Broadway, then Bartons the bakers almost opposite and finally at Richardsons Fabrics, on the corner of the Broadway and Elm Road.

Over the course of the four years that I lived at Cranleigh Drive, my parents put a lot of work into trying to develop the place, possibly more so outside than in – with two outside bird aviaries, sheds built across the bottom of the garden, a workshop for my father and two side ancillary 'dens' for my brother and I and my mother laying out a small

miniature 'village' with prompt-cement carved houses, dwarf plants and even a ruined castle!

I found Leigh on Sea a fascinating place to live, both in terms of all the small shops and character of the modern part of town, but also the 'Old Town' – quite walkable, except perhaps in the dead of winter – when the steps of Church Hill could be treacherous, if laden with ice or snow!

I think it was the still working 'cockle sheds', their piles of empty shells on the beach and that just the general sea air/ozone smell of the place that for me created an ingrained pleasure and fascination that I never got tired of. It didn't matter how many times I went down to Old Leigh wandering about the boats and former fishermen's cottages, the cobbled high street and various wharfs – I never got tired of the place, being repeatedly drawn back, time after time. Old Leigh had a unique character to it that I'm not sure has ever been matched by anywhere else that I have been to in my life.

At the top of Cranleigh Drive was the London Road, along which ran the buses that went to and from my secondary school, and where was located a fine fish and chip shop - which being within walking distance from our house was often used. It had a huge 'fish' illuminated sign outside which you could see from some distance away (if driving along the A13), which was useful when I was first getting used to where my road was. Above that on the same corner of the building was a massive clock (with a face a couple of feet across), which I do not recall ever seeing working – but again now thinking about it, I think was something special.

From the fish and chip shop turning left into London Road, there was as I recall when I first moved there a tobacconist/sweet shop, with all the delights that a young lad of my age could desire (Cola Cubes, Pineapple Chunks, Sherbet Dips, Crisps, Gob-Stoppers, Aniseed Balls, Bazooka Joe Bubble Gum and much more).

H W Stone had several electrical shops in that parade of shops and one of my guilty pleasures, was to rummage among the thrown out boxes at the rear (accessed via a service alleyway) for anything that I felt I could make use of like old batteries, wires, all manner of things. Sometimes if I was rummaging around the boxes, if I heard somebody opening a back door rather than run off, I would hide inside a large enough box and just wait it out, until the person(s) went back inside – that was quite exciting fun in itself.

There was also a traditional ironmongers shop on the corner of the next block of shops, which sold garden tools, buckets, tin baths and hardware. They would also sell 'Esso Blue' Paraffin, which was still in use then for painters' 'blowlamps' (for stripping old paint) and for fuelling some stand-up heaters

I was becoming more curious about the world around me and adventurous in wanting to explore it. Whether it was accessing the not too far away Prittlewell Brook and climbing down into it and following it to Southend (and back), or simply walking on a Saturday along the A13 London Road, the few miles to Southend and walking the same distance back, both things were simple pleasures but ones that would keep me entertained for hours, looking, listening and learning about the world around me every single moment. I would retreat into my own quiet world, wandering the streets around Leigh, Belton Hills, Old Leigh and farther afield.

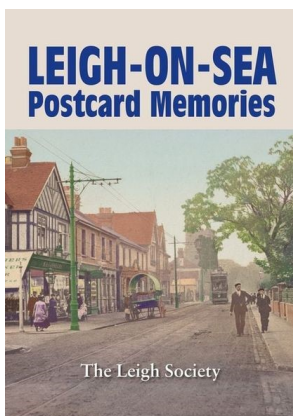
If there's one characteristic of Leigh and its surrounds that I will never forget and always found quite 'uplifting', that was that 'sea' smell in the air that my mother used to refer to as 'ozone'. This exhilarating 'ozone; is said to exude from the thin film of mud, which covers the sand and shingle of the beach, which considering the length of Southend foreshore (between Old Leigh to Shoeburyness), that likely explains why the air is so rich with that smell. That may also go some way to explain why Leigh has always been attractive to retirees and has appeared to have a 'healthy' elderly population – Essex's own 'Elixir of life'!

In May 1973 we moved to a two bedroomed detached bungalow in Oakleigh Park Drive. The property was in need of some 'upgrading', but had a great deal of 'Olde Worlde' charm and potential, which I feel sure is what drew my parents to it.

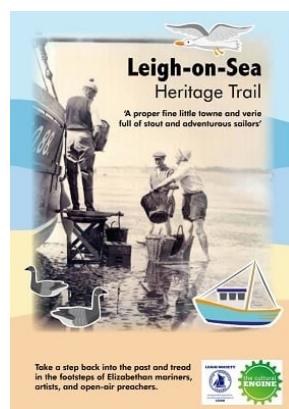
It was whilst I was living there I applied and was accepted into the Essex Police Cadet Corps in September. For over two years I spent most of my time 'living' at residential accommodation at the Cadet Training School in Chelmsford and then returned to the family home until I joined the police proper and then went for a while to live in lodgings elsewhere and then returning to live at home with my parents.

This is where the 'door closes' in terms of my early life and my association with Leigh. There was something very warmly welcoming and addictive about the place and I don't think, looking back, that it was simply the backdrop for my formative teenage years. It was more than that, I think the place had a certain charm, not a million miles from the kind of ambience of Devon and Cornwall, something hard to put into words, but you 'feel it' when there. Whatever that special ingredient is, it seems to make the place forever attractive (calling one back) and makes real the saying; 'That you can take the boy out of Leigh on Sea, but you can't take Leigh on Sea out of the boy'!!

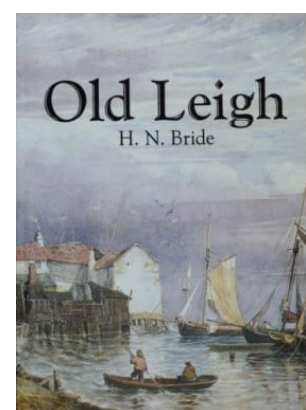
## HERITAGE CENTRE SALES



£10



£2



£5

## **JONATHAN SHADRACH EMERY** (1840-1899)

My Great Great Grandfather, Jonathan Shadrach Emery was born in Leigh on New Year's Day 1840, the fifth child of Matthew Emery, a shoemaker, and Eliza Emery (née Robinson), who would go on to have fourteen children, sadly not all of whom would survive childhood.

In 1840 Leigh was a small fishing community on the north bank of the River Thames; the last port stop before London. In the 1841 census it had a population of 954 persons inhabiting "all that part of the parish of Leigh which comprises the town extending eastward from and including the house occupied by Edmund Turridge (sic) and west to and including the house occupied by John Bell".

Jonathan was baptised in St Clements on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1840. And in the 1841 census he is aged 1 living with his parents and two older siblings William (9) and Esther (6). Sadly, Esther appears to have died the following year. My research indicates there were other siblings of Jonathan who had died at an early age (Richard Matthew in 1838 age 4 and Sarah Anne in 1839 age 1). The family was to suffer another tragedy on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1845 when the eldest son William was killed aged 13 in an accident on the Thames whilst fishing the north shore. His small fishing boat, the Glory, was struck by a large Portuguese vessel, heading out from the port of London under Pilot. He died with the fishing boat's captain, William Clement Gilson, age 26. The two Williams were buried at St Clements and the Chelmsford Chronicle of 29<sup>th</sup> August 1845 reported they were "followed to the grave by hundreds of sympathising friends". Would Jonathan have been amongst them? At age 5 he would surely have felt the pain of losing his older brother and now becoming the oldest surviving child of Matthew and Elizabeth, his other three elder siblings having also died at a young age.

The 1851 census shows Jonathan living with his parents on Leigh Street, (High Street). He is the oldest child in the household, aged 11 and his occupation is shown as 'Fishing Lad', following in the path of his late brother, William; a very young age to be earning a living. There are three younger siblings; Richard (9); Esther (7) and William (5); all listed as scholars. The 1861 census shows Jonathan, aged 21 now living on Belfus (Belhus – this word is different in different censuses) Row, Leigh with his parents. His occupation is fisherman. Also living in the same address are four younger siblings and Jonathan's maternal grandfather, John Robinson age 70, whose occupation is also fisherman.

Jonathan's parents, Matthew and Elizabeth, pass away in 1865 and 1866 respectively. The 1871 census records Jonathan, now age 31, as living in Alley Dock, Leigh with his younger sister Esther (now Frost); her husband Henry Frost and their three children, Jonathan, Esther and Eliza. Jonathan and his brother-in-law Henry are both fishermen. At some point in the 1870's Jonathan made the journey from Leigh to Anglesey and early in 1880 he married Isabella Williams, born in Conway and living on Anglesey in Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch (Llanfair PG). Jonathan is 40 and Isabella is 13 years his junior and pregnant with their first child, Thomas Jonathan, who is also born in the first quarter of 1880 and baptised on 9<sup>th</sup> May that year. In the baptism register, Jonathan's occupation is recorded as 'Sailor'. Jonathan and Isabella are living in Menai Bridge, a small town on the coast of Anglesey where the island is joined to the mainland by the famous, world's first major suspension bridge designed by Thomas Telford and completed in 1826.

The 1881 census of Wales records Jonathan, Isabella and Thomas living in Askew Cottage on Askew Street in Menai Bridge. I visited Askew Street in September 2020 and the building still stands. The street runs at 90 degrees from the main thoroughfare through Menai Bridge, High Street, for about 100 yards down to a small Quay where sailing and fishing boats would have been moored. Jonathan's occupation in 1881 is fisherman, so he would have had a short walk to work, putting out to sail into the Menai Strait within sight of the famous suspension bridge. Jonathan and Isabella's second child, my great grandfather, Matthew was born on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1882 whilst they were living on Askew Street. On first reflection, it is hard to understand why Jonathan, a fisherman all his life, left the pleasant town of Menai Bridge, within sight of the beautiful mountains of Snowdonia on the Welsh mainland to relocate to the heavily industrialised North East of England with his wife and two small children.

This happened sometime between August 1882 and 27<sup>th</sup> October 1884, when Jonathan and Isabella's third son, Richard Henry, was born in Murton Colliery, County Durham.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Murton was a small rural village with a population of 70 in the east of Durham, about two miles inland from the North Sea coast. Murton Colliery as a town did not exist until the first sinking of the mine there in 1838, with a multitude of basic housing, mostly back-to-back terraces of miners' cottages, quickly springing up around the Colliery to accommodate the large, mainly migrant, workforce who flocked to the town. By 1851, shortly after mining in the town began, the population had swollen to 1,387.

It is clear, however, that Jonathan had accepted the call to Murton and no doubt the prospect of ready gainful employment at the Colliery, from his younger brother, Richard, who had already migrated from Leigh to the North East in the 1860s and was living in Murton in 1881, working at the Colliery as a Rope Repairer. Another younger brother, Matthew, would later join them, moving from Leigh to nearby Easington in the late 1880's.

Jonathan and his family lived on Princess Street in the Greenhill area of Murton Colliery. Greenhill consisted of 12 rows of miners' cottages, north of and immediately adjacent to the Colliery. The streets were known locally as 'Cornwall' because of the large population of Cornish former tin miners living there and working in the coal mine. At the 1881 census for County Durham there were around 400 Cornish-born colliery workers, many of whom had distinctive Cornish surnames such as Chynoweth, Penhallurick and Trebilcock. The streets of Greenhill were demolished in the 1950s and the council estate which replaced them, and stands today, has streets all named after places in Cornwall. The 1891 census reveals residents of Greenhill originating from all parts of the UK and it must have been a melting pot of accents and cultures. Jonathan and Isabella, with their Essex and Welsh accents, would not have felt out of place.

Sadly, shortly after moving to Princess Street in Murton, Jonathan and Isabella's eldest son, Thomas, passed away aged six. When the 1891 census was taken the inhabitants of 49 Princess Street were recorded as Jonathan and Isabella and three sons, Matthew, Richard and Jonathan junior aged 8,6 and 1. Their first and only daughter, Eliza Ellen was born on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1893 when Jonathan would have been 53 years old.

Jonathan's occupation in the 1891 census is recorded as 'Colliery Fireman'. The Fireman was the predecessor of the modern Deputy and was responsible for testing for the presence of firedamp (mostly methane) in the mine workings. In early industrial coal mines, the accumulation of firedamp due to a lack of proper ventilation was a common cause of explosions. The Fireman would have originally tested for firedamp holding a long pole before him with one or more lighted candles at its end. This ignited the firedamp and produced an explosion more or less violent according to the quantity of gas accumulated. Development of safety lamps early in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century would lead to a 'Deputy's Lamp' being used to detect for the presence of gas with the Fireman skilled in reading the colour and height of the flame to determine the concentration of firedamp in the air.

Being a coal miner in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century was a hard life. It is not surprising Jonathan passed away at what would now be considered the early age of 59. It was reported in the Sunderland Daily Echo on Friday 30 June 1899 "Last night Jonathan Emery, aged 60 years [sic], employed as a fireman at Murton Colliery, died suddenly on his way to work. He leaves a widow and four children". The short walk to the Colliery gate from Princess Street was a mere 100 yards. His daughter Eliza was only 6 years old (she would go on to become a well-known figure in Murton working as the village post mistress). Jonathan was laid to rest at Holy Trinity Church in Murton on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1899.



Coal Miners; Murton Colliery, Durham, 1894.

His three sons; Matthew, Richard and Jonathan, all Coal Miners themselves, and daughter Eliza would support their mother Isabella until she died in 1929, aged 76. They were all living together 12 years later at number 55 Princess Street when the 1911 census was taken on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. At her death on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1929, Isabella was living with her eldest son, Matthew, his wife and second child, Doris at 1 Model Street, Murton. Her daughter, Eliza, was also living at the same address. Other information taken in the 1911 Census for the first time under the heading "Particulars as to Marriage" records, during the twenty years of Jonathan and Isabella's marriage, they had seven children 'born alive', four of whom were still living and three who had died.

Richard Jonathan Emery

## THEN AND NOW THE TITHE HOUSE



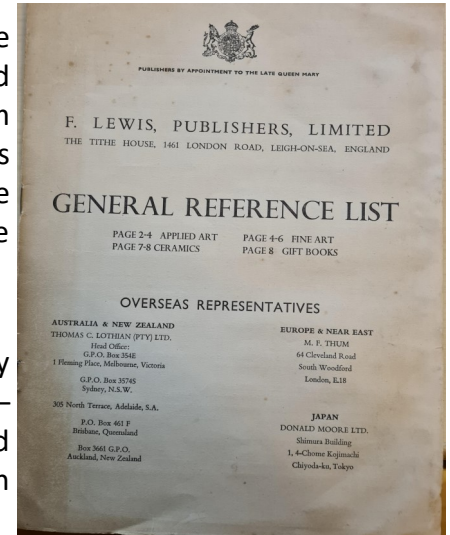
Many of you will know this impressive building as St Margaret's House at 1461 London Road—which provides supported living.

But a chance buy on Ebay (again) revealed its past.

On 20 November 1931 the firm of F Lewis, Publishers, Ltd was incorporated and from Kelly's Directories of the 1930s the property was the

headquarters of this Company and the home of Frank Lewis and his wife Elsie. It was known as the Tithe House.

On the 1939 Register at that address were Frank Lewis born 27 January 1899 - Book Publisher/MD and Elsie F Lewis born 16 August 1902 - secretary to publisher - so a family business. Frank Lewis had married Elsie Stockwell in the Rochford District in 1928 and died aged 86 in 1985. I can find no children.



### DEAR DIARY

We are hoping to run as full a calendar of meetings as possible this year, pandemic permitting and speakers available of course.

So keep the following dates free in your diaries. Entry is £2 for members and £3 for non members and the talks will be held at the Leigh Community Centre starting at 7.30pm.

**PLEASE NOTE THERE IS NO MEETING IN MARCH**

13 April—AGM and Ray Osborne talking on Cockling, then and now

11 May—Lost Leigh with Jenny and Ed Simpson

Dates and speakers yet to be arranged for September, October and November.

If you have heard a particular speaker at another event that you think would be suitable given the interests of the Leigh Society please let Carole know at the usual email address.

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 or pass it on to friends and family, but if not please recycle it

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### CAN YOU HELP?

As the Heritage Centre reopens after a January break and a terrible couple of years, we are putting out a call for more helpers who can do a regular weekly stint or specific days on a regular basis monthly

If you think you could be a steward in the Centre, even if only for half a day a week, or would like to help with school visits once they restart, please get in touch with Pat Gaskell on 01702 473573 for a chat.

