

# **71 LEIGHWAY 71**

# **LEIGH CONSERVATION AND**

# **HERITAGE**

# **SUMMER 2023**

## **CONTENTS**

8

### **DEAR DIARY 2023**

Entry £2 for members and £3 for non members..



## ST CLEMENTS WILDING

To celebrate all the wonderful work he and others have done to enhance the biodiversity of the churchyard, Peter Monk here explains the background and the way forward.

The idea of using part of St Clements churchyard for wild flowers was first conceived many years ago by Michael Stone who was a stalwart worshiper at the church. At that time a small area was rotavated and seeded and bush saplings were also planted alongside the east



church wall but sadly these were removed by persons unknown. Some years later Michael, who lived in Rayleigh, attended a church nearer home and involved himself in the preservation of wild flora at the historical Rayleigh Mount.

With covid and the lockdown the then Southend Borough Council were unable to maintain the mowing of the Churchyard so, inspired by Michael's forward thinking, regarding Biodiversity, those years gone by, and with the full knowledge of the Southend Parks Department, the southside of St Clements Churchyard underwent a complete makeover by three members of the church.

Now there are seven designated areas to allow wild flowers and grasses to flourish which in their turn attract butterflies and bees. To the delight of many children, dogwalkers and the public in general a labyrinth of paths has been mowed and maintained around the area offering a close-up view of what is growing and the various types of small creatures already mentioned. While walking the paths and listening to the bird song it is easy to believe you are in the countryside and not in the heart of a bustling town. Adding to this pleasure there is a place to rest and take in the splendid view across Old Father Thames.



A flourishing herb garden has also been lovingly created near the east wall of the churchyard and a Bug Hotel exists amongst the trees and bushes on the slope of its southern edge where each year in the spring Bluebells grow in increasing numbers. A small log pile patch is now established among the grasses as are other patches that have been dug over and sown with an assortment of wild flower seeds to bloom in their turn.



Lawns and planting have been maintained, around Leigh's very own War Memorial, the Calvary. The Dunkirk Memorial, in memory of those four brave men from Leigh who lost their lives on 1st June 1940 when the Renown hit a sea mine, has now a trimmed lawn surround cut into the shape of a boat. Lobelia has been planted at port and starboard to represent the sea and at the bow (the pointed end) poppies are often numerous. Other new areas have been dug and planted as manicured flowerbeds next to the south walls of the historic church itself. The lawns and flowerbeds outside the west door are also kept in good order when time allows. It is likewise the intention to keep the edges of the main thoroughfare mowed and trimmed to show a pleasing contrast between that path and the more 'wild side' of the church yard.

The response from the general public who have sat or just passed through has, to date, been overwhelmingly positive and encouraging of the ongoing work being carried out. So, all areas remain in their natural untrampled state it is requested that at all times dogs be kept on a lead

## THEN AND NOW—ST CLEMENT'S INSTITUTE



No I don't mean the late lamented St Clement's Hall, we all knew and loved in Rectory Grove, now replaced by Eden Point—I leave you to judge!

The hall was opened around 1925 and from further information gleaned it appears to have been a replacement for the St Clement's Institute. This is all around the time that Broadway West was built and Leigh House demolished—so great upheaval in that area.

We knew that The Institute was in Elm Road and had a fair idea that it was on the site of what used to be Leigh Print and Copy, now Latham Street and Mrs B's.

Through a sheer stroke of luck following a conversation on facebook, David Caten in Southend posted some pictures in an album he had unearthed in his house, all of which looked to be about 1920s. He thought some of them were of places in Leigh and I was able to confirm this, and David kindly offered to donate them to the LCAH archives. We met up and although only a few pics they were all connected to St Clement's in some way being of the Church, Church Hill etc. Also the pic of St Clement's Hall above.

What he hadn't posted on facebook was this picture of the St Clement's Institute, I personally had never see a picture of it before.



Could I match it up with its potential position in Elm Road. Well yes I could. It's a bit small

but if you look closely the buildings to the right and left have not changed much in terms of their height and shape and squeezed in between was a cycleworks and car hire firm.



So could I pinpoint the years with the position. I looked at various maps which just showed a block of buildings in that position until I got to the 1921 Old OS Map of Leigh when low and behold the abbreviation *Inst* appears at the very spot.



St Clement's Institute was a gathering place for local people where discussions took place, meetings were held as well as entertainments.

**ST. CLEMENT'S INSTITUTE (LADS' CLUB).—On Monday, Mr. T. C. Welton, R.A.M.C., and late of the Imperial Yeomanry, delivered an interesting lecture, entitled "South Africa in Peace and War," showing also some excellent lantern views of Tommy Atkins during the South African war, and views of various parts of South Africa. The lecture was much appreciated by the audience of some fifty**

Tommy Atkins was the generic name for an ordinary British soldier established during the nineteenth century, but is particularly associated with the First World War.

Hence our soldiers were called Tommies.

The Institute also had its own football club. The 1910 Kelly's Directory notes that Frank Bundock was the caretaker. This is probably George Franklin Bundock who lived at 22 Elm Road, a shipwright.

IN MEMORY OF TWO GUERNSEY SAILORS ,  
THOMAS HALE & THOMAS WHITE , AND JOHN KERRY FROM LEIGH-ON-SEA

**RESTLESS**



RESTLESS - Brigantine (Trading Schooner) was based in St Sampsons harbour in Guernsey during the 1890's although Restless was named on the Port of Salcombe register.

Restless was largely employed in the home trade and would have carried Guernsey granite alongside other cargo from the Island to English ports such as Portsmouth, Southampton, Newcastle, Hull, Grangemouth, and Cowes It seems she often returned to Guernsey with much needed building timbers. It seems both ship and crew had a busy lifestyle.

St Sampsons Harbour, Guernsey, it was here where a young local teenager named Thomas Hale, joined the Restless as a boy crew member on 1st July 1913, he was just 16 years of age! Thomas joined the crew as ship's cook, this giving him a step into a merchant naval career.

I wonder if he had made himself known to the crew? or did he previously know the two Guernsey crew already serving, either Alfred Root or Thomas White? both were able seaman. Either way as a youth, I can only imagine how this splendid ship captured his imagination as he saw her sail both in and out of Port, he would have witnessed this from his home at North Side St Sampsons, which overlooked the harbour.

**Jan 27th 1914**

On approaching the Thames on a cold misty morning, the Restless peacefully sailed toward London laden with stone, the peace was soon interrupted with chaos, bravery and disaster, leading to loss of life.

Restless was struck on the port side by the city of London's dredger "Lord Desborough," it only took several minutes for the ship to sink. During this manic time White, Hale and Doyle had managed to jump from the Restless onto the Dredger and saved themselves. Then immediately and unselfishly they lowered a small craft/rowing boat into the water in a bid to save the lives of their crew mates who were now undoubtedly in grave danger. They bravely managed to reach John Kerry who was still onboard the sinking ship, sadly at this very moment in time the Restless capsized taking the craft, rescuers and Kerry down with her.

Doyle miraculously managed to free himself and swam from the sinking ship, he remained in the cold water for some 20-25 minutes before being rescued by a fishing boat, alongside Captain Playle, Ships Mate W Harden and AB Alfred Root. Doyle said, he didn't know how he managed to survive, and that the rowing boat got caught in rigging when the restless capsized and all were taken down with the swell. Thomas Hale and Thomas White drowned alongside AB John Kerry their bodies were sadly never recovered.



At the enquiry the actions of Desboroughs' 2nd officer was blamed for the incident which led to the sinking of the Restless and the loss of the three lives. His license to act as a ship's officer was taken away for three months.

Thomas Hale was mentioned for his brave actions and for not hesitating to jump into a small rescue craft, especially as he was only 16 years of age and had only been at sea for 6 months. The bravery of all I'm sure wasn't undervalued!

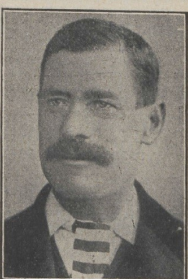
### The Crew of the Restless

CAPTAIN	GEORGE PLAYLE	50	(JERSEY)
MATE	WILLIAM HARDEN	43	NOTTINGLY (UK)
AB	ALFRED ROOT		GUERNSEY
AB	EDWARD DOYLE		WEXFORD (IRELAND)
AB	THOMAS WHITE		GUERNSEY
AB	JOHN KERRY		LEIGH-ON-SEA (UK).
Porter may have been			
COOK	THOMAS HALE	16	GUERNSEY

With grateful thanks to Nigel Porter for allowing this reprint of an article written for the River Thames Society.

### Note from Carole

James Kerry was my Great Great Uncle born in Leigh, so aged 60 at his death. The papers, as ever, got his name and age wrong.

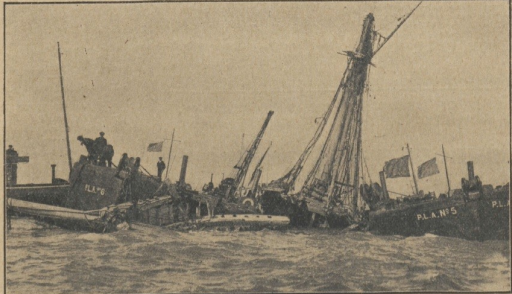


MR. J. KERRY, formerly of Leigh, who was drowned in the schooner Restless off Southend.

**THE WRECK OFF SOUTHEND.**

SWG 30.1.1914

On Tuesday three sailors lost their lives as the result of a collision between a sand dredger, "Lord Desborough," and the schooner "Restless," of Guernsey. The schooner, which was laden with stone, and was bound for London, was near the Nore lightship, when the collision occurred, the weather being hazy. Some of the crew of the schooner were able to jump on board the dredger, but three of the crew were drowned with the sinking of the boat. These were:—T. White, of Guernsey, J. Kelly, of Leigh, and T. Hale, the coos. The other men swam about until they were picked up by a fishing-boat and taken to the "Lord Desborough," and afterwards landed at the Southend pierhead. Kelly was a single man, about fifty-five years of age, and had been on the "Restless" since last June. For over twenty years he has been connected with sailing in the Channel Islands.



Efforts have been made recently to raise the wreck of the sailing ship "The Restless," after lying off Leigh for three months. "The Restless" was run into by the Port of London Authority's dredger "Lord Desborough," resulting in three of the crew losing their lives. The delay was caused by a controversy between the Port of London Authority and Trinity House. The photograph shows part of the wreck between two of the Port of London Authority's lighters. (Photo, "Topical Press.")

SWG 8.5.1914





## FOSMS (Friends of Southend Museums) DONATION

Many of our members will remember FOSMS – The Friends of Southend Museums which presented some interesting powerpoint talks and visits to historical sites over many years. Unfortunately we were unable to attract younger volunteers to continue into the future and we decided to wind up the business.

FOSMS were the direct successors of the Southend-on-Sea Antiquarian and Historical Society operating at least since the 1920s and possibly earlier. As a result we had an extensive library of antiquarian books collected by John Turner which we inherited. First they were offered to the Essex Records Office who were thrilled with the many books they did not already have. The remainder were sold to a book dealer in Cambridge and the residue by auction. We had another amount of money from a bequest by the estate of Joyce Marthe Kipling.

We were able to donate £25,000 to the Southend Museum Service to deal with waterlogged archaeological remains from the Thames which are awaiting preservation. The remainder allowed us to give £1000 each to many local historical organizations including the Friends of Historic Essex, Rayleigh Town Museum, Southend Pier Museum, London Shipwreck Group, Benfleet Historical Society, Canvey Archives Group, Foulness Heritage Centre, Hadleigh and Thundersley Historical Society and last but not least we were happy to donate £1000 to the Leigh Heritage Centre for updating the display features of the museum.

Ed Simpson  
FOSMS Vice Chairman

### FREEBIES

Due to a print overrun we have surplus stocks of the Heritage Trail and Memories of Old Leigh Port. We are happy to supply these to any groups who may find them of interest or to individuals free of charge. P & P may apply. Contact Carole at the usual address if you would like a supply.

Perfect little birthday or Christmas treats

### HERITAGE CENTRE BOOKS



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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