

## LEIGH MARITIME ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Councillor Carole Mulrone is Chairman of the North Thames Fisheries Local Action Group. The Group has been working over the last 3 years on several projects following the grant of a considerable sum of money to support and promote the fishing industry of the North Thames which is of course mainly based in Leigh.

So far, the Group has secured a building in the Library Gardens for future promotion and exhibition space, worked with the Town Council on a Spatial Plan for Old Leigh and other projects related to the fishing industry. The project focuses on the maritime life of Leigh from the fishing industry to boatbuilding to the modern day needs of tourism and heritage preservation.

New information boards will be installed in the Old Town, a new Education Park will be prepared, a Thames Estuary fishing book will involve interviews with those who had or have a maritime link to Leigh, be it on the water or memories of the Old Town and the popular heritage trail is to be updated

The Project I am writing to you about is an exciting one being promoted by the Leigh Heritage Centre working with the Cultural Engine in Southend \*

Basically we want to put together a catalogue of interviews with people who have over the years been associated with the fishing industry or other activities on the water and/or have a long knowledge of Leigh as a fishing port and remembrances of life here, knowledge of your family connections to the port, be it as a sailor, boat builder or part of the fishing industry or as a resident with a love of the place and memories to share. This will then be converted into a book.

I am hoping that you might be interested in taking part in this oral history project. Giles Tofield and Anna Patel of the Cultural Engine are the overall coordinators of the project and it is hoped U3A members can partner them for just the Oral History part.

It is on a tight timeframe I'm afraid because the work is being co-ordinated by a professional team who will be training up local people to carry out the interviews over 2 dates, **13 and 20 September in the Heritage Centre in the Old Town**

So, the big question is would you be prepared to take part in this enterprise?

**We need U3A members who would like to take part in training to be interviewers for the Interview Days in September. This very valuable free training could be interesting to anyone who would like to do further work in Oral History.**

Also, if you know of anyone in your family or friends who would be interested in imparting their memories, please ask them to contact Jennifer Simpson U3A National Shared Learning Project Coordinator and your local project contact at [jdsimpson057@gmail.com](mailto:jdsimpson057@gmail.com) or please ring me on 01702 712922

\*Giles Tofield is Director of the Cultural Engine CIC, a Southend based social enterprise that supports a range of public and third sector organisations to get interesting social and cultural projects off the ground, secure funding and develop strategy. Previously Head of Regeneration at Renaissance Southend, he has worked in regeneration across London and the Thames Gateway over the last 15 years, working at the cross section of Government policy and local planning/economic development and cultural strategies. Giles has therefore been heavily involved in many of the major public sector funded development and public realm schemes that have been seen in Southend since 2010. With a background in Critical/Literary Theory, he retains a healthy interest in analysing public policy and how this ultimately affects the real world (public spaces, transport strategy and major developments for example), and how supposedly separate sectors (transport, art/culture, health, heritage, education...) are all interconnected.