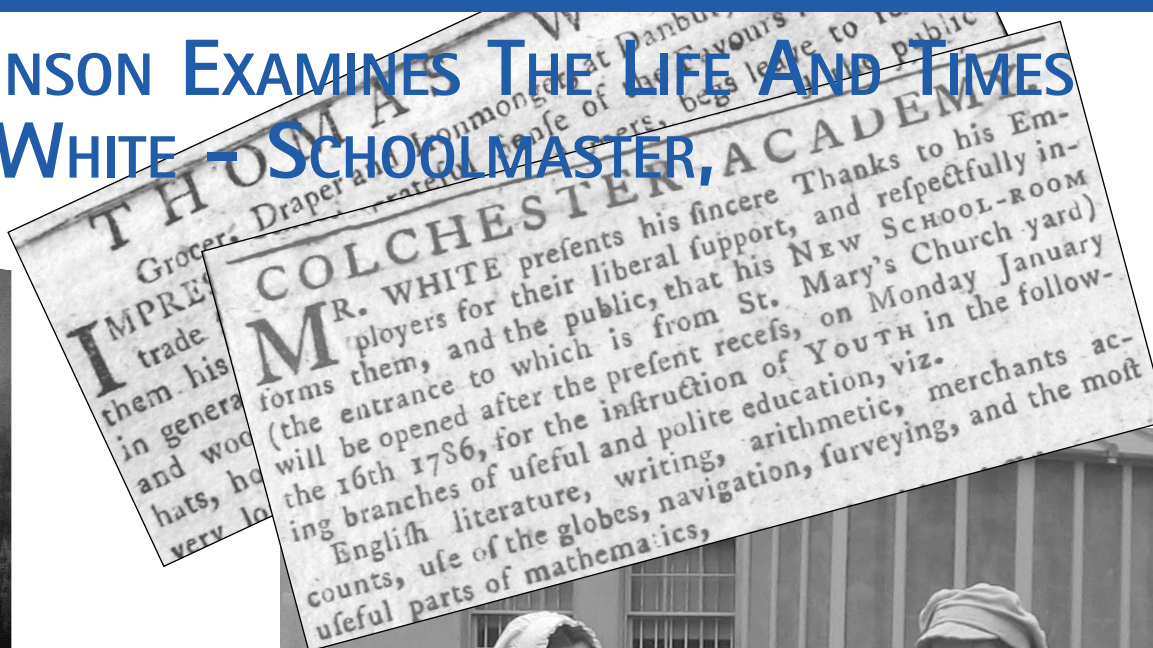
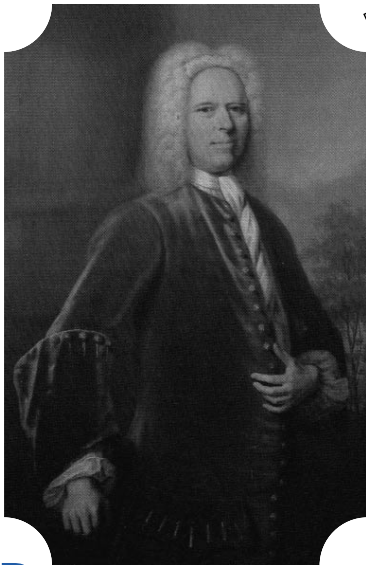


# Essex JOURNAL

A REVIEW OF LOCAL HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

Autmun 2008

## DAVID TOMLINSON EXAMINES THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THOMAS WHITE – SCHOOLMASTER,



PLUS,  
SIR CHARLES RAYMOND  
OF VALENTINES,



JACK HUMPHREYS, AN EARLY ESSEX AVIATOR



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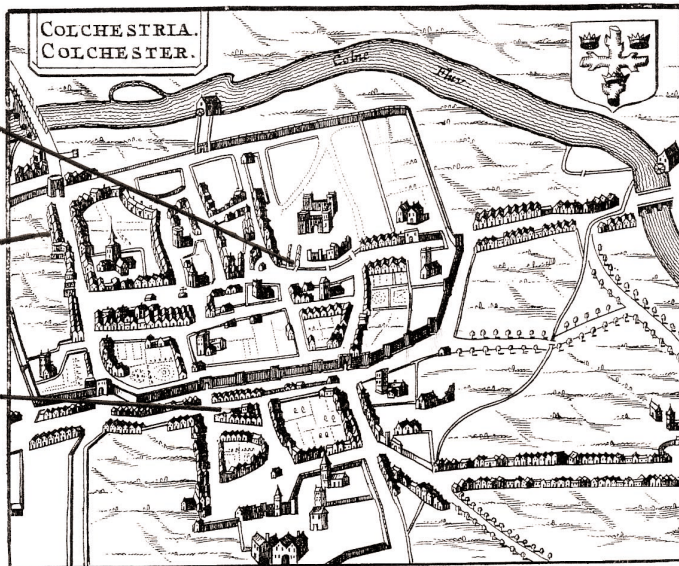
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Contributions are welcome and should be sent in a Word format to the Hon. Editor at the email listed above. General correspondence can either be emailed or posted to: 30 Main Road, Broomfield, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 7EF. He is more than happy to discuss any proposed articles as he does not guarantee that unsolicited material will be published. Contributors are requested to limit their articles to 2,500/4,000 words, other than by prior agreement with the Editor. Style notes are available.

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Sir Charles Raymond, (Reproduced by courtesy of the Royal Bank of Scotland);  
Advertisements placed in the *Chelmsford Chronicle* by Thomas White, 21/06/1776 and  
30/12/1785 (Reproduced by courtesy of the *Essex Chronicle* and Essex Record Office);  
A model of the 'aerohydroplane' built by Bill Ellis of Wivenhoe (C. Thompson) and  
the cook admonishing the gardener about the quality of his asparagus!  
Re-enactors at Audley End, (A. Hann).

**and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine...that the land perish not through the famine.**

(Genesis 41: 34-36)

**W**ell, what times we live in and I feel in a fighting mood what with all the news that we are bombarded with. Now I'm not a religious man, indeed I don't really have any religion, but the Bible does have some decent words of advice if you go looking for them, such as those quoted above. I've known about these particular ones for as long as I can remember. My dad and grandad ran a market-garden in Broomfield, they set it up during the immediate aftermath of the Second World War when everything was scarce, and my dad has often referred to the 'seven years of plenty and the seven years of dearth' that, in particular but not exclusively so, has been a basic tenet of the agricultural sector. My dad and grandad had to be very careful with resources and treat the boom years in a very level headed way for early frosts the following year, or too much rain at the wrong time, could ruin prospects of good returns.

Now I'm sure that we're all familiar with the idea of balancing our household economies and making hay while the sun shines whilst putting aside resources for the rainy day (I'll see how many more proverbs I can get in this editorial!) It comes of something of a shock to hear that those tasked with looking after our investments, so earnestly and honestly made, have made such a ham-fisted job at sensibly and realistically making them work for the common good. Such is the wonderful job they've made of ruining our economy, yet still made time to award massive bonuses to themselves, that it appears to me that the whole damn lot of them have been guzzling away with their snouts in the trough and barely a thought for the years of famine to come.

So, what have these present dismal economic times got to do with the *Essex Journal* editorial? I don't want to rant, although it does help to vent one's spleen, but rather I think that as historians we can take much heart from the experiences that we research and read about from the past, perhaps even from the stories we have read in these pages. I would go so far as to say that it is we historians who are best placed to remain phlegmatic and make sound judgements regarding our present difficulties.

We have only to look to the past to realise that what we are experiencing now, whilst moderately uncomfortable, is in reality just one more of those things.

If I had been in Broomfield 660 years ago, in 1348, I'd probably be hoping that the nasty pestilence that had killed a third to a half of the population of Europe and southern England and had reached as far as London had finally stopped. We know that it hadn't and that it was to continue ravaging the country for the next 200 years or so. We can take from this event the fact that despite the dreadful death toll our ancestors, the ones who survived that is, got by. When life must have seemed so bloody awful with little hope people must have kept on going.

One of my favourite personal historical heroes, FD Roosevelt, who I was first taught about by Mr Smith Head of history at Rainsford when I was taking my GCSEs in 1987-88, was courageous and bold in the face of economic melt-down. Our present crisis has been likened to that which followed the crash of 1929, although I can't imagine that poverty on that scale will follow. Imaginative solutions to poverty and job creation kept America going and again our forebears kept on going.

So we return to the beginning, and this is slightly depressing thing. Advice, such as that from the Bible, has been around forever, along with examples of human courage and fortitude. We can draw strength and encouragement from them as we face our own challenges. But, and it is a big but, we never seem to learn from these mistakes. A very timely quote for our times was provided by Lord Petre in the last issue of *EJ* when he quoted Marx: 'Hegel remarks somewhere that history tends to repeat itself. He forgot to add the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce'. This is what we need to learn, especially those in positions of power and responsibility, and where we historians come in to our own. Let us keep looking to the past for inspiration and for warnings of what not to do and to this end let us make sure that history and the teaching of history and the dissemination of history continues to be important and relevant for everyone for all time.

One last thing, I'd like to welcome Jenepher Hawkins to the *EJ Editorial Board* as our new Honorary Membership Secretary. Jenepher has a long-standing interest in local history and currently works part-time at the ERO. Jenepher also enjoys digging with the Maldon Archaeological and Historical Group so we should all be in good hands.

Neil



# Restored Valentines Mansion and Gardens to open soon

**F**ebruary 2009 will see the grand opening of Valentines Mansion and Gardens, a Grade II\* listed estate in Ilford, Essex, currently undergoing a major restoration. Originally built in c.1696 as the residence of Elizabeth Tillotson, the widow of Archbishop of Canterbury, John Tillotson, the Mansion has had a succession of owners who have altered, extended and changed its appearance. These have included city banker Robert Surman, who bought the house in the 1720s and created the fashionable gardens, and Sir Charles Raymond, who made his fortune with the East India Company. The council purchased the Mansion in 1912, after which it had a number of uses, from providing shelter for Belgian refugees during the First World War to housing the Public Health Department from 1925 onwards.

Today it looks largely Georgian although internally there are indications of its earlier periods. It sits in its own parkland, now Valentines Park, and its immediate setting is an amazing survival of an ornamental Rococo landscape – all just a five-minute walk from Gants Hill tube station. Now the Mansion and Gardens are being comprehensively restored, thanks to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the

London Borough of Redbridge. Very little is being replaced or altered, and the house is being carefully repaired and redecorated in period colours. Outside, the eighteenth century walled gardens, watercourses, Rococo grottos and other features have all been painstakingly restored.

Various rooms will be furnished to reflect different periods in the history of the house and its owners. There will be a permanent display on the history of the house and park in the old Library, and changing exhibitions in the Gallery. School children will explore the reconstructed kitchen and dairy as part of an exciting new education programme. Artists and craftspeople will occupy studios in the old servants quarters, and showcase their work. An exciting events calendar will run throughout the year, including talks, family activities and themed events. A range of stunning rooms within the Mansion will also be available for hire for weddings and functions, meetings, and community group use. Building work is almost complete, and the Mansion and Gardens will open to the public on Valentines Day, 14th February 2009.

For further information, please contact: Laura Williams, Valentines Mansion Project Manager, [laura.williams@redbridge.gov.uk](mailto:laura.williams@redbridge.gov.uk), or visit [www.redbridge.gov.uk](http://www.redbridge.gov.uk)

# Sir Charles Raymond of Valentines

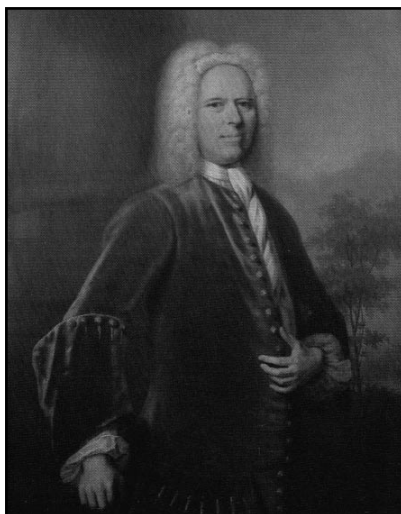
by  
Georgina Green

For centuries Britain has been dependent on overseas trade to provide many of the luxuries and necessities of life. Whilst this maritime trade was carried out by a number of companies, under Royal Charter, the influence of the East India Company made it one of the foremost City institutions in the Georgian period. This often dangerous and risky trade gave those engaged in it the chance, if they survived, to make vast fortunes and reputations. One among them was Sir Charles Raymond who, on his retirement from the sea, made his home at Valentines in Ilford. This article will look at his career both at sea and at home as a banker and landowner.

Charles Raymond (Plate 1) was born in Devon, the son of John Raymond of Marple (or Marpool) and his wife Anna Maria, daughter of Samuel Tanner of Clyst St Mary. He was baptised on 23rd April 1713 at Withycombe Raleigh,<sup>1</sup> now a part of Exmouth, and brought up with his sister, Anna Maria, who was nine years older. Three sons had been baptised and each died within a year before Charles was born. John Raymond died when Charles was 12 so he inherited

with the waves  
washing the rocks at the  
bottom of the garden...

considerable property in Devon when he came of age.<sup>2</sup> Two of his uncles were captains, and with the waves washing the rocks at the bottom of the garden, it must have been almost inevitable for the young lad to consider going to sea. Just before he was 17 he sailed as Purser on the *Dawsonne* East Indiaman on a trip to Madras and Bengal. This was a clerical post which allowed a young man of a good family to find out what a voyage was like.



**Plate 1. Sir Charles Raymond, (Reproduced by courtesy of the Royal Bank of Scotland).**

However it was a very responsible position for such a young man. The voyage was managed by Hugh Raymond, his uncle, (i.e. he signed the charter-party agreement)<sup>3</sup> who invested in many ships which sailed for the East India Company (EIC) in the 1730s and had many contacts within their circle.

His next voyage was as Fourth Mate on the *Princess of Wales*,<sup>4</sup> again thanks to his family connections. While Charles was at sea, Hugh Raymond built a new ship which he intended for his nephew. He must have had great confidence in Charles's ability to trust this huge investment to his command. It was established practice that once the Court of the EIC had used a vessel, the ship and its commander could expect to be regularly employed by the Company. Hugh was now approaching 60, but supporting Charles would help ensure a bright future for his nephew even if he was no longer around to employ him. Without the family connections a new captain could expect to pay the owners of his first command a great deal of money.

But it was not certain that any new ship would be accepted by the EIC and Charles Raymond was still only 21 when he was

proposed as Captain of the *Wager* early in 1735. In 1765 the EIC brought in a ruling that a captain had to be at least 25 years old.<sup>5</sup> The Company would not risk their cargo in a ship unless they had confidence in the Captain, but it helped to have contacts within the Court of Directors. Hugh's son, Jones Raymond of Saling Hall, served as a Director for much of the period between 1734-57 and in 1757 Hugh's nephew, John Raymond of Chigwell,<sup>6</sup> was also elected to the Court. The family appears to have worked together for their mutual benefit throughout the eighteenth century. Hugh Raymond first offered his new ship, *Wager*, to sail for the EIC on 30th August 1734 but only 13 ships out of the 21 tendered could be chosen and the *Wager* was not selected. It had been the joint thirteenth choice and had lost out on a second ballot. However a week later the East India Court decided an additional voyage was necessary, and so the *Wager* with Captain Charles Raymond was added to their fleet.<sup>7</sup>

## Captain Charles Raymond

Charles Raymond served as the Captain of the *Wager* on four journeys for the EIC. The journals of many voyages undertaken by ships for the EIC are held at the British Library and are a wonderful source of information. Reading about Charles Raymond's voyages provides an insight into the way of life on a ship. The speed in knots and depth in fathoms are recorded for each hour of day and night while on the voyage. Every day the weather is noted, and the course is shown frequently. It was not until the 1760s that longitude could be established accurately, but the instruments for recording this were not introduced routinely for East Indiamen until 1791.<sup>8</sup> So in Raymond's time the

# Sir Charles Raymond of Valentines

Captain noted details of many land marks seen which might help in building up better charts when the ship returned to London.

The position of the Captain was one of great status. He commanded the ship which was run on a day-to-day basis by the Chief Officer, also known as the First Mate. Under him were four other Mates and several Midshipmen. There were also the master craftsmen like the Carpenter and Caulker, the Surgeon, the Gunner and the Boatswain. A crew of about 100 men were shown leaving England on these voyages, although maybe 15-25 might die during the voyage (often of fever at port in India), and others joined the ship.

## The Finance of sailing for the East India Company

When Raymond made his second voyage as a Captain in 1738 he was paid £10 for each month of the voyage. This was slightly longer than the average, leaving The Downs (off Deal in Kent) in February 1738 and returning at the end of August 1739. Those of the crew who served the entire voyage were paid from 5th February 1738 to 12th October 1739 when they were discharged, so the Captain earned £202.6s.8d for 20 months and seven days.

However, there were sums deducted for his various legal and other expenses, so his 'take home pay' was £181.15s.5d The Chief Mate was paid £5 a month, Second Mate £4 a month, the Carpenter earned £3.10s a month, Third Mate, Purser and Surgeon were paid £3 a month whilst the the Midshipmen and Seamen were all paid 23s per month.<sup>9</sup>

However Raymond's salary as Captain pales into insignificance, as while in India he had the opportunity for private business. All members of the crew were also entitled to bring back their own private trade goods, the space allowed depending on their rank. The success of this must also

have been dependent on the financial investment available at the ports visited for trading. For his first voyage Charles had worked with his uncle Hugh Raymond, but Hugh died in July 1737 so the charter-party agreements for the second, third and fourth voyages of the *Wager* were signed by Charles's cousin John Raymond, Captain Joseph Tolson and Francis Salvador.<sup>10</sup> In December 1737 Charles Raymond signed a bond with Edward Radcliffe of London which seems to have been a loan for £2,520 to be repaid within 30 days of his ship returning to the River Thames.<sup>11</sup> Possibly Charles was working in a syndicate with John Raymond and others, and had a part-share in the ship, as well as other investors in his private trade. The private trade goods brought back to England by the crew were sold by the EIC or claimed by the owner after the value was noted. Captain Charles Raymond earned £3,100 in this way which would have easily cleared the loan and given him a profit. However he had also deposited Rupees with the EIC's Accountant in Bengal for which he was later paid £3,000 in London.<sup>12</sup> So his earnings in trading privately earned him at least 30 times the salary paid to him as the Captain.

## Marriage to Sarah Webster

When he was on shore, between voyages, Charles Raymond would have spent much time at the shipyards, checking on the ship, engaging his officers, and preparing for the next voyage. However, on 22nd January 1743 Charles Raymond found time to marry Sarah Webster at the church of St Stephen's, Walbrook, in the City of London.<sup>13</sup> She was the daughter of John Webster of Bromley, Kent, who owned considerable property but had died two or three years after Sarah's birth. John was not married to Sarah's mother, Judith, but went to great lengths to ensure that his children inherited what would have been their due

had they been married.<sup>14</sup> Judith later married William Guy who had been an executor to John Webster's will. Guy was involved in provisioning ships and it could well have been through him that Charles met Sarah. Both William and Judith were shown as living at Wellclose Square, Wapping, when they died in 1755 and 1759 respectively.<sup>15</sup> By this time Charles had inherited the family property in Devon while Sarah was co-owner of an estate in Bromley. Barely nine months after their marriage the parish register of St John's, Wapping, records the burial of Anna Maria Raymond of Wellclose Square. No baptism is recorded so perhaps she died within hours of her birth. Sarah was to suffer the loss of other children once Charles had returned from the sea: Anna Maria (2) died aged 13 months in August 1748 and Anna Maria (3) died in April 1749 just 17 days after her baptism.<sup>16</sup> By 1750 Charles and Sarah had moved to a more prestigious residence at Upton<sup>17</sup> and it was at West Ham church that their eldest surviving child, a daughter named Sophia, was baptised on 6th May 1753.<sup>18</sup> She had at least two younger sisters, Juliana and Anna Maria, and possibly a brother who died young.

...it must have been almost inevitable for the young lad to consider going to sea

## Captain Raymond's last voyage

The last voyage that Charles Raymond undertook was unusual in that it lasted for a lot longer than most. On the outward journey they were delayed, leaving England in May 1744, so that when they tried to reach the Coromandel coast (the south east coast of India) the wind and current were against them. Instead, by a joint decision of all

# Sir Charles Raymond of Valentines

the officers, they sailed to Batavia (Jakarta) to repair the ship and take on water and fresh food as scurvy was becoming a serious danger. They finally arrived at Calcutta nearly a year after leaving home. At first the men were employed in transporting their cargo to the company warehouses and repairing the ship. Rigging was replaced and new anchors obtained. By July the weather was hot and cloudy with a great deal of rain and a number of the men became 'exceedingly sickly' and seven died during the month. Charles Raymond must have had a heavy heart when he wrote in the log book 'The 10th died Mr Thos Webster, Purser, of a Malignant fever' as this was his brother-in-law.<sup>19</sup> It seems that Thomas was having his first experience of the sea in the position that Charles had filled on his first voyage, 15 years earlier.

In October they started to load stores and their cargo which included at least 4,200 bags of salt petre, 30 tons of red wood, 300 bags of cowrie shells and a large quantity of bales of silk. They stayed in the vicinity of Calcutta for 36 weeks and towards the end of that time the men had little to keep them occupied and the

Captain was quite agitated at not being allowed to sail. '31st January, my Charter Party being expir'd I enter'd a protest against the Honble Company & their Governour & Council for not Despatching ye ship' However on 7th February he welcomed aboard 'the Hon Thos. Braddyll Esq, late Governour of Bengall who goes home as Passenger' and was then able to sail for England, arriving in August 1746 after stopping off for 18 days at St. Helena.<sup>20</sup>

## A new career

A year later, 12th August 1747, Joseph Salvador and Joseph Tolson signed the charter-party agreement for the fifth voyage of the *Wager*, with Captain Charles Raymond as commander. However on 28th October Charles Raymond sent a letter to the Court setting out his ill state of health and asking the Court to approve of Mr Josiah Hindman for Commander of the *Wager* in his place. It is not possible to tell if he was actually suffering a serious illness, or whether this was an accepted way of backing out, as the letter has not survived. But on 18th November 1747 a new charter-party was signed for the

*Wager*, by Charles Raymond and Joseph Tolson, with Josiah Hindman as Captain.<sup>21</sup> This was the start of Charles Raymond's 40 year career as the Principal Managing Owner of many ships sailing on over 100 voyages for the EIC. The exact details are still being collected but in three seasons, 1756-58, he signed charter-party for 16 out of 62 voyages made by EIC ships. One of the ships which Raymond took over was the *Sandwich* which had been managed by Robert Surman and Simon Rogers for her previous two voyages. However Rogers died and on 31st January 1753 and Raymond signed the charter-party with Edmund Godfrey, a London merchant and brother of EIC Director Peter Godfrey.<sup>22</sup> Maybe Raymond visited Robert Surman in the course of their business dealings? Surman had lived at Valentine House in Ilford since 1724 but on 10th October 1754 Charles Raymond became the owner.<sup>23</sup>

## Valentine House

At that time the building was more compact than the Mansion we know today. The dairy wing was a separate entity with large glass windows, used as a conservatory or orangery. The main entrance seems to have been on the opposite side of the building, under the balcony, the porte cochère was not added to the house for another 50 years. In 1769 it was substantially rebuilt and three rain-water hoppers still bear that date with the Raymond symbol today. It was described in 1771 as 'one of the neatest, and best adapted of its size, of any modern [building] in the county; its ornaments are well chosen, and the grounds belonging to it laid out with great judgement and taste.'<sup>24</sup> The land acquired by Raymond covered a substantial area stretching from the River Roding to Ley Street, with other properties in the district. This included the estates of Cranbrook, Wyfields and Highlands between Cranbrook

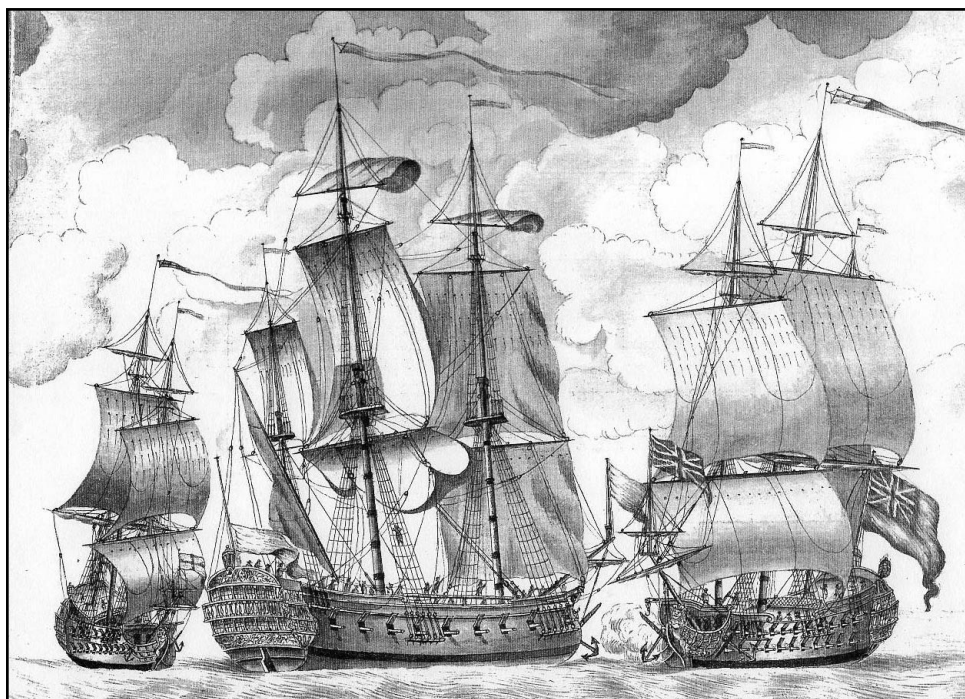


Plate 2. Drawing from the journal of the *Suffolk* 1755/56, L/MAR/B/397D 9, p.89, March 1757, (Reproduced by courtesy of the British Library).

# Sir Charles Raymond of Valentines



Plate 3. 'Valentines' from *A New and Complete History of Essex by a Gentleman*, Vol. IV., p.276-277, 1771,

(Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office).

Road and the Roding.<sup>25</sup> Some of the fields he retained, others he sold on, but in 1765 he rebuilt Highlands House which he leased to Captain William Webber who had served with Raymond on the *Wager* and later married Elizabeth Webster, sister of Sarah Raymond.<sup>26</sup> He too invested in shipping and managed voyages for the EIC.

Sarah and Elizabeth had two younger step-sisters, daughters of Judith and William Guy, one of whom, Ann, married John Williams of Aldborough Hatch.<sup>27</sup> His family was also closely involved with the EIC and he also invested in shipping. He had a rope-works at Blackwall and worked closely with Charles Raymond. It is worth adding that Raymond became executor to many wills as captain and then manager of shipping, but he was also named by several relatives who referred to him in affectionate terms, such as 'my brother-in-law and faithful friend' by John Williams.<sup>28</sup>

Raymond took a keen interest in his garden, planting a Black Hamburg vine in 1758. A cutting of this was taken to Hampton Court ten years later, where it still flourishes.<sup>29</sup> In 1771 it is recorded that there was a collection of 'curious birds and other animals' in the garden.<sup>30</sup> He was also credited with introducing a new species of *Camellia*, *Camellia japonica*, *variegata*: 'This was one of the first varieties of the Double Camellias seen in this country. It was brought over from China

sometime about the year 1792. We remember to have seen the first plant, soon after this period, at Sir Charles Raymond's, Valentine House, Essex.'<sup>31</sup> However, Sir Charles Raymond had died four years earlier. It seems likely that *Camellia japonica*, *variegata* did bloom first at Valentines, but while it was the home of Donald Cameron, Raymond's friend and business associate who purchased Valentines from Raymond's executors.

## City and political interests

On 8th April 1756 Charles Raymond became a Manager of the Sun Fire Office. This position involved a considerable commitment of time as each Manager served on at least one sub-committee which met every week. It was also a position which the newly appointed Manager could expect to hold for the rest of his life. Many positions were passed through generations of a family, so it was very much a closed shop and quite how Raymond gained entry is not known. Perhaps it was through some charity work, such as being a Governor of Bridewell and Bethlem Hospitals.<sup>32</sup> His colleagues were men who had power and influence in the City and the commitment was a very shrewd career move. Raymond now had regular contact with men like Sir Crisp Gascoigne (who had been Lord Mayor of London in 1752) and Peter Godfrey who was at that time the Chairman of the Court

of the EIC. In 1766 Raymond was elected a Director of the South Sea Company, which was another City financial institution, giving him more work but more contacts.<sup>33</sup>

Raymond continued as a Manager of the Sun Fire Office and as time went by he was joined by his brother-in-law William Webber of Highlands (5th January 1764). He eventually disqualified himself so that his place could be filled by his new son-in-law, William Burrell, on 8th July 1773. Shortly before this he purchased a considerable holding of land in Woodham Ferrers (including the manor of Champions) and Cold Norton which had been acquired by the Sun Fire Office in default of a loan. He added the manor of Edwin's Hall and in all the holding covered approximately 1,900 acres.<sup>34</sup> This was sold shortly before he died for nearly £22,000.<sup>35</sup>

By 1770 Charles Raymond was extremely wealthy. His various business interests must have been managed by a team of men providing legal, clerical and physical labour and he had his own warehouse for storage.<sup>36</sup> Apart from Valentine House he had a home in the City<sup>37</sup> and for business he could always be contacted via the Jerusalem Coffee House<sup>38</sup> at Cowper's Court which was used by many people involved with the EIC shipping. In 1771-72 Charles Raymond was Sheriff for the County of Essex and on 31st May 1774 he was created a Baronet.<sup>39</sup> He had earned his position by hard-work and shrewd business sense and he now tried to extend his influence into politics. In October 1774 Raymond put himself forward to stand against John Wilkes in the Middlesex Parliamentary elections. However, after Wilkes was elected Lord Mayor of the City of London and it was clear he had a major body of support, Raymond stepped down.<sup>40</sup> On 8th August 1774 Raymond had been given the Freedom of the City of Exeter

# Sir Charles Raymond of Valentines

and in 1776 he wrote offering himself as a prospective MP for Exeter, but he not supported as a candidate.<sup>41</sup>

In 1771 Raymond and his brother-in-law John Williams became founder members of a bank known as Raymond, Williams, Vere, Lowe and Fletcher, with each partner investing £5,000. This eventually became Williams Deacon's Bank and is now part of the Royal Bank of Scotland. In 1778 he retired from this bank and established another, involving first his brother-in-law, William Webber of Highlands, and later Donald Cameron, his attorney and no doubt a friend.<sup>42</sup>

The 1770s was a time of massive expansion in the Midlands and Raymond, Williams, Vere, Lowe and Fletcher became partners in a bank in Manchester.<sup>43</sup> Their bank paid £4,000 for a fifth share with four men of standing locally, though none of them had previous experience of banking. Over the years most of the other partners died or dropped out and Raymond took an increasing share of the financial backing. William Allen managed the bank's affairs in Manchester, but sadly his brother-in-law, John Livesey, took advantage of his position and Allen loaned him far more than was prudent.

Allen managed to evade questions from the London partners until it was discovered that Livesey had been involved in serious fraud and in the spring of 1788 Livesey, Hargreave & Co. and William Allen were declared bankrupt. All this was most unfortunate for Sir Charles Raymond who died on 24th August 1788. The *Gentleman's Magazine* first reported that 'This gentleman is supposed to have died worth £200,000.' This was later corrected to 'Sir Charles property may amount in the whole to £150,000 though he met with a great loss just before his death in consequence of his having imprudently suffered himself to be exhibited to the

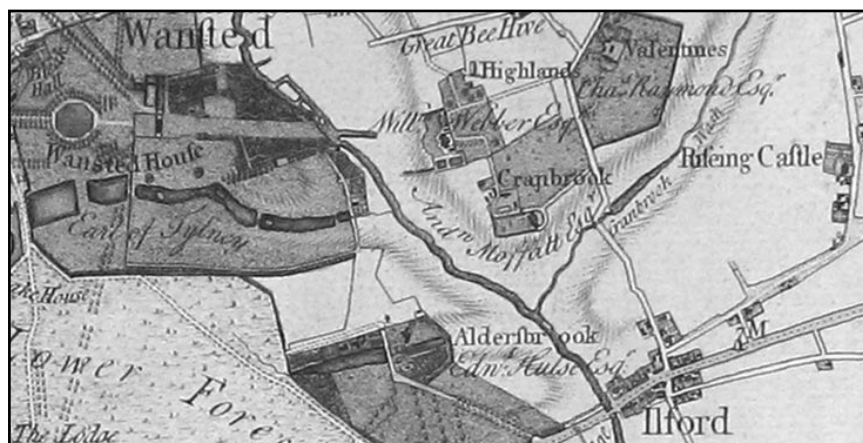
world as partner in the banking-house of Allen, of Manchester, and being therefore answerable for the payment of their debts.'<sup>44</sup> Raymond's obituary reported that he died at Highlands, his house near Ilford, and that he left his whole fortune equally divided between his two daughters, independent of their husbands, and afterwards to their children. The baronetcy then passed to his son-in-law William Burrell.<sup>45</sup> At this time Ilford did not exist as a separate parish so he was buried at St Margaret's at Barking, as his wife Sarah had been.<sup>46</sup> After his death his daughters sold Highlands to Sir James Long and it was merged into the Wanstead House estate. His wife, Lady Sarah Raymond had pre-deceased him, dying on 14th April 1778<sup>47</sup> whilst William Webber died the following year. Soon after their deaths Raymond had left Valentines to live at Highlands with the widowed Mrs Webber, his sister-in-law.<sup>48</sup> In 1765 he had built a three-sided crenellated tower on the Highlands estate as a mausoleum for his family. Apparently it had catacombs with 14 compartments in the underground vault. Above this was a chapel, and above that a room where refreshments could be served. However no-one was ever buried there as Raymond and the Bishop could not agree over certain points connected with the consecration, so the ceremony was not performed.<sup>49</sup>

Sir Charles Raymond had led a long and largely successful life. Initially he was guided by family connections, but having survived the perils of the sea and the heat and diseases of India, he became a successful City businessman. For something like 30 years he controlled a fifth to a quarter of the voyages undertaken for the EIC<sup>50</sup> and he became a leader of the shipping interest with that Company. He had considerable influence in the City, but seems to have been a man of integrity with an amiable nature.

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# Sir Charles Raymond of Valentines



**Plate 4. The Valentines and Highlands estates from Chapman & Andre Map of Essex, sheet 21, 1777, (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office).**

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I would like to acknowledge the assistance given me by Mr John Farrant, who has been researching the history of the Burrell family, also Mrs Jean Sutton and several others who are working on aspects of the EIC. I am also grateful for the help and encouragement given to me by Mr Richard Keen who dived to find the wreck of Raymond's ship *Valentine* which was lost off Sark (Channel Islands) on 16th November 1779.

## The Author

Georgina Green has recently retired after 18 years as an administrative officer in local government. She has written several books and her topics of interest include Epping and Hainault Forests, Humphry Repton, Wanstead House, Copp'd Hall and Woodford. Since 2000 she has been researching the history of Valentines Mansion in Ilford and much of her research into the Victorian period will help inform the educational use of the restored building.

# Thomas White, 1750–1804

## Master of Colchester Academy

by

David Tomlinson

As the eighteenth century progressed, the demand for education gradually increased, resulting in many small private schools being established to meet the needs of the growing middle class. Such schools were easy to start, as the only requirement was having sufficient funds to rent suitable premises and to purchase textbooks, stationery, benches etc. Many did not survive for long for one or more reasons: insufficient pupils, a poor reputation, rumour (malicious or untrue), and an outbreak of a serious illness causing parents to remove their children from the school. In Colchester, one of the larger towns in eighteenth-century England, at least 50 private schools were established during the century,<sup>1</sup> Thomas White's school being one of them.

Thomas White was born in 1750. Of his parentage and upbringing nothing is known. When 24 he married by licence Ann Langton, who was 22, on 16th November 1775 at St Margaret's, Barking.<sup>2</sup> He signed the register in a firm small hand, whilst his wife's signature though legible was a little shaky, owing perhaps to the seriousness of the occasion. Their first child, Thomas, was baptised at Mountnessing in August 1776,<sup>3</sup> and their second, Thomas Penny, at Danbury in 1778.<sup>4</sup> Whilst at Danbury, Ann also gave birth to Ann Zulestrina, Louise, and Louise Fisher.<sup>5</sup> After the Whites moved to Colchester, Ann had three more children, Cordelia Shepherd, Jane Indiana and John Calcutta.<sup>6</sup> The first time Thomas White's name appeared for certain in the columns of the *Chelmsford Chronicle* or *Ipswich Journal* was in June 1776, when he advertised his Danbury shop in which he sold groceries, ironmongery and

drapery (Plate 1). The next week a second advertisement informed readers that he sold the finest teas, coffee and chocolate at the lowest prices and that he arranged funerals.<sup>7</sup> His shop, it would seem, was a general stores attempting to supply all the needs of the local community. Also in 1776 White opened a school at Danbury.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps the shop was a means of providing him with extra income whilst he established himself as a schoolmaster.

in the agricultural year?

A year later White advertised the start of the next term and thanked parents for their support.<sup>10</sup> He had recently moved to Colchester to take over Michael Boyle's school.<sup>11</sup> Where that school was is not known for certain, but probably it was in part of the building in Head Street that earlier in the century had been known as the Three Crowns Inn. Boyle was living there in 1787<sup>12</sup> and may have

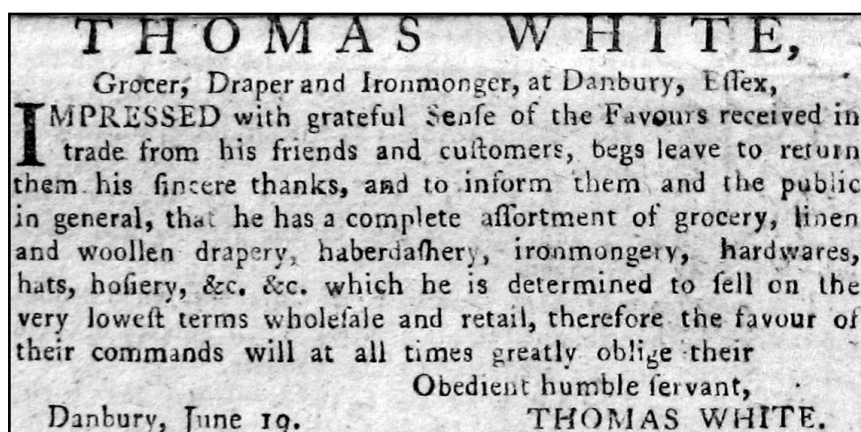


Plate 1. Advertisement placed in the *Chelmsford Chronicle* by Thomas White, 21/06/1776 – ERO, D/F 66/1/3. (Reproduced by courtesy of the *Essex Chronicle* and the *Essex Record Office*).

His next known advertisement appeared in July 1784,<sup>9</sup> and it reminded parents that his academy for young gentlemen was to open after the holiday on the following Monday. Many of his scholars were certainly the sons of local farmers, as he stated 'the plan of taking day scholars for the quarter only having been found inconvenient to many of Mr White's employers [the parents], he has determined to accommodate them by admitting a limited number by the week'. Was White attempting to make his academy more exclusive, open only to boys whose parents could afford to keep their sons there all the year, rather than to those of less-affluent farmers who needed the help of their growing sons at harvest and other important times

been residing there for a number of years, as his wife ran her millinery business from that building. The Revd Charles Hewitt, Master of the Free Grammar School, in a letter to the Bishop of London referred to an English school there.<sup>13</sup> The land tax returns suggest that White moved immediately into part of the King's Head, a large inn also situated in Head Street. For 1785 he paid no tax as it was collected in arrears, but for the following year he paid £1.4s on a rent of £6.14 Six months later White announced he had a new schoolroom, the entrance of which was from St Mary's-at-the-Walls churchyard (Plate 2).<sup>15</sup> White's name appears in indentures to the King's Head dated 29th October and 7th November

# Thomas White, 1750-1804

1785,<sup>16</sup> as he had leased a parlour, kitchen, buttery, pantry, and closet, over which were two chambers and an assembly room, and above them were three garrets. He also had a stable, a garden, a building that had been used as a granary and a small parcel of land leading to St Mary's-at-the-Walls churchyard. White had great plans for his school, judging from the curriculum he was to provide: English literature, writing, arithmetic, merchants accounts, use of globes, navigation, surveying, and the most useful parts of mathematics. He employed the services of three peripatetic masters (Mr Conway taught French and Latin, Mr Dagueville dancing and fencing, and Mr Dunthorne drawing) and had room for six boarders. His success must have been considerable, for in January 1787 he informed parents of improvements to his house and school, now known as Colchester Academy, which would enable him to accommodate a considerable number of boarders.<sup>17</sup> He was to continue taking day scholars and private pupils, and could provide a 'proper master to teach French'.<sup>18</sup> The wording of part of the advertisement suggests that

White was beginning to be proud of his achievements: 'the same liberal plan and tender treatment will be followed, which for a series of years at his academy in Danbury secured to him the approbation of a numerous and most respectable list of employers.'

White was soon involved in the life of Colchester. By December 1787 he was treasurer of the Colchester New Subscription Assembly,<sup>19</sup> which was to meet at the old assembly room in Head Street, one of the rooms White leased and used as a classroom.<sup>20</sup> A month later an advertisement for the recently formed Essex and Suffolk Medical Society stated that White was its secretary and librarian and that the library was kept in the old assembly room.<sup>21</sup>

The school continued to do well. Proudly he announced in both the *Ipswich Journal* and the *Chelmsford Chronicle* in March 1788 that he had more than 40 new pupils since the end of the Christmas vacation, and that Monsieur Roussel and 'proper English ushers' assisted him in teaching the boys. He also informed parents that Mr Harrington taught music and dancing.<sup>22</sup> Most of the new pupils

must have been day scholars, as he stated that he had two vacancies for boarders. Two months later White advertised for an usher to be an English assistant and described his school as large.<sup>23</sup> He was seeking a man who was 'a sober, steady person, capable and willing to take a very active part in the business'. Three months later White was in print again, possibly because a Mr Lewis was opening on North Hill an academy similar to his and offering an extensive curriculum.<sup>24</sup> The opening sentence of the second paragraph suggests that White had encountered some difficulty at his school or was contradicting rumour. 'Mr White flatters himself that his unimpeached conduct as a teacher of youth in Danbury and Colchester, for near twelve years, will shield him against attacks of his opponents.' This advertisement is the first to mention that his academy is situated in part of the building that was formerly the King's Head Inn. In it he also stated that he had never had so many pupils as he had at present.

At the end of January 1789 he paid for a lengthy advertisement in the *Ipswich Journal*.<sup>25</sup> In it he first thanked 'his numerous friends and supporters' for their support during the late 'fruitless and ungrateful opposition', and then stated because of loyal support he had nothing to fear 'from further attempts to injure his school'. Besides attempts to harm his school's reputation – was Mr Lewis up to no good? – a problem had arisen at the school. He announced that he would return to live in the school house, engage an additional assistant, suitably qualified and of good moral character, and admit evening scholars on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.<sup>26</sup> Possibly the behaviour of one of his ushers had been far from satisfactory. He proposed to open a writing school for young ladies, which would meet between 11 and one o'clock each day in the old assembly room. In changing

**COLCHESTER ACADEMY.**  
**M**R. WHITE presents his sincere Thanks to his Employers for their liberal support, and respectfully informs them, and the public, that his NEW SCHOOL-ROOM (the entrance to which is from St. Mary's Church yard) will be opened after the present recess, on Monday January the 16th 1786, for the instruction of YOUTH in the following branches of useful and polite education, viz.  
 English literature, writing, arithmetic, merchants accounts, use of the globes, navigation, surveying, and the most useful parts of mathematics,  
 By THOMAS WHITE, and able Assistants.  
 The French and Latin languages by Mr. CONWAY.  
 Drawing by Mr. DUNTHORNE,  
 Dancing and fencing by Mr. DAIGVILLE.  
 Six Young Gentlemen may be genteelly accommodated as boarders.  
 Globes, mathematical instruments, and a well selected library, appropriated to the use of the pupils.  
 DEC. 28, 1785.

Plate 2. Advertisement placed in the *Chelmsford Chronicle* by Thomas White, 30/12/1785 – ERO, D/F 66/1/6.

(Reproduced by courtesy of the *Essex Chronicle* and the Essex Record Office).

his arrangements, he also announced that the entrance to the school would be from Headgate. Though he was doing well, Thomas continued to attend private pupils. He was also prepared to board foreign young gentlemen 'if well recommended' and to teach them the English language, charging one guinea a week, to be paid in advance (a practice very unusual at the time).

Success seems to have gone to White's head. His advertisements were becoming more pompous and would continue to be so. His December 1789 advertisement began 'Mr White, fully sensible of the generous encouragement he has had for a series of years received from his friends, the public, begs permission to offer them his most grateful acknowledgement'.<sup>27</sup> In that advertisement he informed parents that he had taken into partnership Mr John Salmon, his principal assistant.

His advertisement of a year later provides several pieces of information.<sup>28</sup> Young ladies were still being taught in the old assembly room and private pupils at their homes. The demand for boarding places was such that six pupils could be 'genteelly accommodated with board' at Mr Salmon's house situated near to the school. Six months later White was seeking a few young gentlemen 'of respectable connections to complete a limited number of boarders, namely twenty-one'.<sup>29</sup> He also wanted one or two parlour boarders (who lived separately from the other boarders under more luxurious conditions and their fees were considerably more, often twice as much) and an apprentice ('a Youth of fourteen, fifteen or sixteen years old, who has been carefully brought up, and possesses improvable abilities'). As Salmon is not mentioned, probably the partnership had been dissolved.

In 1792 White found time to publish an eight-page booklet with tables of weights and measures.<sup>30</sup> Such tables were necessary, as measures were not stan-

dard throughout the country. It was printed by W. Keymer, Junior, of Colchester, who also sold it as well as three booksellers in London, and booksellers in Chelmsford, Ipswich, Hadleigh, Bury St Edmunds, Norwich and Woodbridge. As White had taught farmers' sons, he must have seen a need for such a publication.

In September 1791 an advertisement<sup>31</sup> was addressed to masters of boarding schools, academies, and day schools in the county of Essex. Thomas White placed it there as a result of the response he had received to a circular letter and prospectus dated 25th July. It gave notice of a meeting to be held on 29th September 1791, at Chelmsford, to institute a 'society and establishing a Fund for the Relief and Support of such Widows and Orphans of Schoolmasters, in the County of Essex, as may be left in Necessitous Circumstances'. The *Chelmsford Chronicle* reported on the meeting,<sup>32</sup> at which Charles Alexander Crickett, MP for Ipswich, was elected treasurer and nearly 50 people subscribed a guinea each. The notice for the next meeting of the charity, known as the Essex Charity for the Support of Decayed Schoolmasters, Widows and Orphans, is signed Thomas White, secretary.<sup>33</sup> Six months later subscribers to the charity met again and were informed any subscriber who contributes 10s or more is a governor and may vote at meetings.<sup>34</sup> At that meeting £82.0s.6d was given to the treasurer to invest in the funds. In December 1794 White informed subscribers and benefactors that the publishing of the accounts for 1794 would be delayed until the treasurer had received and invested the interest on £300 in 3% consols, and that the laws of the society could not be printed until the magistrates had approved them.<sup>35</sup> In June 1799 White was still the charity's secretary, and the Revd Dr Grimwood, master of Dedham Grammar School, was its president.<sup>36</sup> The vice presidents were

the Revd J. Robertson and Mr P. Larcher, master of Great Baddow School. How long White remained secretary is not known.

White's advertisement at Christmas 1793<sup>37</sup> suggests the school was increasing in numbers and that White was doing well financially. No longer did he give lessons in private houses as this was 'incompatible with the duty he owes his boarders', but he provided instead at his school two hours of lessons a day in French, English, merchants accounts, navigation, etc. From another advertisement it is learnt that one of White's ushers, Byatt Walker, was leaving to take over Mr Barnard's school at Sible Hedingham, having spent 'upwards of eight years apprentice and English assistant to Mr White'.<sup>38</sup>

A year later White announced the number of boarders was to increase from 20 to 25.<sup>39</sup> 'As there are now Four vacancies, Mr White hopes he shall be pardoned if he suggests, that he wishes them to be supplied by young gentlemen not less than 11, nor more than 15 years of age, of respectable connections, and who require, from the principal and other masters employed in this Seminary, exertions beyond what can be afforded in the common school hours.' Obviously White was attempting to raise the social status of his intake besides increasing his numbers. He had two Frenchmen residing at his academy, one a gentleman 'of distinguished literary talents' teaches French, and the other an officer who was 'esteemed one of the first Fencing Masters in Europe and teaches that science' at the academy. The former was seeking a few private pupils and the latter, as he had additional commitments in the neighbourhood, wished to teach pupils who have returned home for the school holidays. They were not the only French *émigrés* seeking a living in Colchester by teaching. Three living near St Botolph's Gate advertised for work in 1797.<sup>40</sup> White's fees ranged from

# Thomas White, 1750-1804

16 to 25 guineas per annum, plus a guinea entrance, and, almost certainly, were for boarding and teaching subjects such as arithmetic, handwriting and English. Other subjects would have been charged as extras. At the same time, White gave notice that 'on account of the enhanced price of every article of domestic expenditure...he shall be under the necessity of advancing the price of those boarders who shall enter after the expiration of one year from the present date', and advertised for a servant 'who understands plain cooking and is capable of assisting in a laundry', obviously to cook for the boys and help with their washing.

In the following June, White was seeking as an apprentice a 'youth of proper abilities' and also gave details of his new peripatetic dancing master, a Mr Foster, who had taken over from Mr Metralcourt and had trained under Mr Novere, another well-known peripatetic dancing master, by whom he was strongly recommended.<sup>41</sup> White, like many masters and governesses, was pleased to keep the public informed about the peripatetic masters he employed as many of them had acquired good reputations.

Over the next few years the number of pupils in White's school grew steadily. In June 1796 he increased the number of boys he could board from 22 to 27.<sup>42</sup> When 18 months later he was seeking two school boarders and one parlour boarder, he informed parents that his fees were between 18 and 30 guineas, the former for school boarders and the latter probably for parlour boarders.<sup>43</sup> He now demanded three months notice of a boy leaving his academy, a stipulation being insisted upon by more and more school proprietors. In September 1799, he announced that he wanted to increase the number of pupils considerably and to enable him to do so he had had 'a thorough course of repairs and alterations made to his dwelling

house, school and premises'.<sup>44</sup> He assured parents that his accommodation was adequate for the boys by stating at the bottom of his advertisement: 'N.B. The lodging rooms are twelve feet high and very large and so exceedingly healthy is the situation that in the course of thirteen years [the time he had been teaching in Colchester] not a single week's illness has occurred.' Three months later he sought more pupils and indicated that increased numbers would help him to keep his fees unchanged and 'to continue to his young friends [his pupils] all those comforts they enjoy under the present establishment'.<sup>45</sup> He did point out that his terms might have to increase 'if the present enormous price of provisions continues'. He thought it important to mention that he had 'a small, but well selected library, a capital pair of globes, useful maps and charts, and various mathematical instruments for surveying, navigation, &c &c for the use of his scholars', possibly because many boys' schools similar to his were not so well equipped.

By June 1801 he had almost doubled the number of boarders that he had originally intended to house.<sup>46</sup> Possibly he was extending his curriculum as he employed several peripatetic masters who taught French, Italian, drawing, dancing, music and fencing. It must not be forgotten that more parents were appreciating the value of having their sons, if not their daughters, well educated. Hence possibly White's success. But was the demand for schooling the sole reason for White's success? Probably not, as surely it can be argued that White was a good teacher, having an excellent understanding of boys and how they learnt. He was not shy in coming forward to mention this. 'After Three and Twenty Years practice, as a principal in the business of Education, and the most sedulous attention to the different modes of conveying instruction successfully to different capacities

## COLCHESTER ACADEMY.

*Christmas Vacation, 1803.*

**T**HE advanced price for all the necessary Provisions for a Boarding-School (Flour only excepted), and the consequent advance in the price of boarding, through the greater part of the kingdom, might well justify the Masters and Governesses of Boarding-Schools in Essex, (one of the dearest counties in the kingdom,) in a very considerable augmentation of their terms; but when it is considered that the prosperity of this county must in a great measure depend on the advantages or disadvantages accruing to Gentlemen engaged in Practical Agriculture, the present is by many deemed an improper juncture to raise the price of boarding in Schools. Actuated by this sentiment,

**T. WHITE**

Takes the liberty respectfully to inform his Friends and the Public, that he continues to receive young Gentlemen (of respectable connexions only) on his usual terms, viz. Twenty Guineas per Annum, and One Guinea Entrance, for School Boarders; and Thirty Guineas per Annum, and One Guinea Entrance, for Parlour Boarders, which comprehends Lodging, Boarding, and Education in the following branches of Learning, viz. English Grammar and Composition, Writing, Arithmetic, Retail Book-keeping, Trigonometry and Mensuration, in theory and extensive practice.

The terms for additional branches of Literature and polite Accomplishments having undergone some alteration, are now fixed as under; and it must be obvious to every one, that though the prices are sufficiently reasonable to come within the reach of persons of respectability with but moderate incomes, they are sufficiently high to prevent too indiscriminate a mixture of Pupils, viz.

	Entrance.	Per Qr.
	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
For Latin and Greek .....		1 1 0
French .....	1 1 0	1 1 0
Italian .....	2 2 0	2 2 0
Merchants' Accounts, Foreign Exchanges, &c. ....		1 1 0
Geography, with the Use of the Globes, and Construction of Plane and Mercator's Charts .....		1 1 0
Geography, Globes, Maps, &c. ....		1 1 0
Land Surveying, with Use of Instruments .....		1 1 0
Dancing .....	1 1 0	1 1 0
Fencing.—No Master at present.		
Drawing .....	1 1 0	1 1 0
Music .....	1 1 0	1 1 0

As there are three Assistants constantly employed, besides extra Masters, it must be considered as an indispensable contract, that if any young Gentleman leaves the Academy without giving a quarter's notice, a quarter's boarding must be paid for.

It produces the most solid comfort to the Advertiser to find, that after having done his duty to his Pupils in the former part of his life, he is now, by them, entrusted with the Education of the second generation; and, to crown the whole, that his employers continue to give him assurances of the most perfect satisfaction, as to the health, learning, morals, and happiness of the young Gentlemen intrusted to him.

The present vacation will terminate on Monday, January 16, 1804.

**Plate 3. Advertisement placed in the Chelmsford Chronicle by Thomas White, 30/12/1785 – ERO, D/F 66/1/6. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Chronicle and the Essex Record Office).**

# Thomas White, 1750–1804

and dispositions, T. WHITE flatters himself that he is enabled to make the greatest improvement in the Pupils entrusted to his care, that their faculties may be capable of or their future destinations in life require.<sup>47</sup> 'In every Department of Business, the best Masters and Assistants are selected and tho' the prices are so extremely low, it is universally allowed by the parents of the pupils, that the accommodations and treatment are at least as liberal as in the schools where double the prices are charged, while the general improvement of most of the scholars, the striking progress of some in particular, and the rank and situation in society

obtained by those who have left the academy (and which they are happy to attribute to their Education alone) are the best eulogiums on the management, mode of education, &c.'<sup>48</sup> Fees for school boarders had risen to 20 guineas, whilst those for a parlour boarder were 26. The charge for a day scholar, which included the teaching of grammar, was three guineas per annum and for an office scholar six guineas.

In December 1803, White paid for his largest advertisement yet and it ran to 62 lines (Plate 3).<sup>49</sup> Parlour boarder fees had risen from 26 to 30 guineas, whilst those for school boarders remained unchanged at 20

guineas. The basic fee covered lodging, boarding and instruction in English grammar and composition, writing, arithmetic, retail bookkeeping, trigonometry and mensuration in theory and practice. In addition, pupils could receive instruction in Latin, Greek, Italian, French, merchants accounts, foreign exchanges, etc., geography, with the use of the globes, maps, etc., navigation, plane and Mercator's charts etc., land-surveying and mapping, dancing, fencing (no master at present), drawing, and music. Each subject cost one guinea a quarter except Italian for which the fee was two guineas. White was employing three full-time



Plate 4. *Black Monday, or The Departure for School*, engraved by John Jones (c.1745–97), published by W. Bigg, 1790 (mezzotint engraving) (see also CHT 184962 by Bigg, William Redmore (1755–1828) (after) Private Collection/ The Bridgeman Art Library.

# Thomas White, 1750-1804

assistants besides several peripatetic masters. He stated that he was now teaching the sons of former pupils, which says much for White's success as a teacher and proprietor.

Thomas White died on 14th August 1804, aged 54 years.<sup>50</sup> It is not known of what he died or whether his death was sudden or expected. All the *Ipswich Journal* stated about the event is: 'Tuesday died, sincerely lamented, Mr Thomas White, Master of the Academy, Colchester.' Almost a year earlier Thomas had made his will.<sup>51</sup> He was buried decently but without fuss, as instructed in his will, at St Mary's-at-the-Walls on 19th August. On an outside wall of the church is a plaque to his memory, the wording similar to that given in his will: 'To the memory of Thomas White Master of an Academy in this town upwards of 19 years who died August 14th aged 54 years'.

Within a few days of his death, Thomas's wife Ann was advertising: 'The widow of the late Thomas White begs leave to inform her Friends and the Public in general, that it is her intention to carry on the Business of the SCHOOL, for the Support of herself and Family; and for this purpose she means to engage immediately, either a Partner or a steady Assistant, fully qualified to conduct every thing in the best manner - At the same time she pledges herself that nothing shall be wanting on her part to render every thing comfortable to the Pupils in the Domestic Department.'<sup>52</sup> In the following December's advertisement, the proprietors were given as White and Plume. Both were conscious of the need to keep the school on an even keel. 'White and Plume pledge themselves to discharge faithfully the important duties of their offices; and whilst attentive to advance each pupil in the particular studies his future views in life demand, they will never lose sight of endeavouring to improve and establish their morals, and render them happy and comfort-

able.'<sup>53</sup> By January 1806 the Rev Peter Beau was proprietor of the school, now known as Colchester House. His curriculum was probably not as extensive as White's, as the only extras he offered were French, Latin, Greek, dancing, and drawing.<sup>54</sup> The school continued until 1812, when Beau moved it to Tottenham.<sup>55</sup>

Not much can be written of White himself, as there seems to be no information about him except that which can be gleaned from his advertisements or inferred from his will. Thomas, undoubtedly, was a character, determined to make a success of life and to be respected. He must have been full of energy, for besides running his academy, he had private pupils, and participated in various activities in Colchester and further afield. The success of his academy must have been due to his being an excellent teacher and a good organiser. If he had not been, would his expensive school have been so successful? Though most schools were poor by today's standards, many middle-class parents paying good money for their children's education wanted value for money and no doubt White ensured that they received it. Former pupils sending their sons to White to be educated suggests that the school was a good, happy one and that the boys were treated well. School advertisements placed in the *Ipswich Journal* or the *Chelmsford Chronicle* indicate that White's academy was large compared with many, provided a broader and more liberal curriculum than most, and was one of the most successful in East Anglia. Thomas must have been a man of good intellect and may have had a bent for mathematics, as his eldest son, Thomas Penny,<sup>56</sup> was Senior Wrangler and First Smith Prizeman at Cambridge in 1802, and his younger son, John Calcutta,<sup>57</sup> Seventh Wrangler in 1813. The fact that whilst he was proprietor the curriculum included various extras that were dependent on a knowledge of

mathematics and not available in Beau's time, suggests that White had the mathematical knowledge and ability to teach them. In his will he left to Thomas his celestial and terrestrial globes;<sup>58</sup> to John his mathematical, philosophical, optical and land surveying instruments; to Cordelia 'all the copper plate prints designed or painted by my friend Bigg' (Plate 4);<sup>59</sup> and to Jane his two volumes of 'Dr Johnston's Dictionary in quarto' and the right to choose six books from his collection. Ann White was to have the house in St Botolph's Street 'now let by me to Samuel Gibbs and which I hold by virtue of a lease from John Adams of Great Wakering in Essex'.

Thomas must have been well respected, for he mentions in his will that he was the executor of a number of wills, a trustee of several sums of money in English funds, and a guardian to several minors. He appointed his wife and son Thomas to act in these matters on his behalf as is lawfully permitted. His son John claimed<sup>60</sup> that his father was descended from the Rev Dr Thomas White,<sup>61</sup> sometime Rector at St Dunstan-in-the-West, Fleet Street, who bequeathed money for the founding of Sion College, London Wall, and established the White Professorship of Moral Philosophy at Oxford. Possibly this claim may explain, to some extent, why Thomas seemed to be conscious of status and eager to teach the sons of families belonging to the more elevated echelons of society. The fact that Thomas's will was proved in the Prerogative Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury suggests that he did have status.

It is impossible to give an accurate evaluation of Thomas White's academy, as there is insufficient information to do so. His advertisements and those for other boys' schools suggest that the standard and quality of education that he provided was higher than many similar schools and probably was not equalled by

any other school in the Colchester area. It would seem that he was a caring and responsible master eager to achieve the best for all his pupils. Almost certainly it can be claimed that his school was outstanding judged by the standards of the day.

## References

1. D.Tomlinson, 'Education in Eighteenth-Century Colchester, 1700–1815', *Essex Archaeology and History*, 37, (2006), pp.116–136.
2. Essex Record Office (ERO), D/P 88/1/11, Barking St Margaret's, parish register.
3. ERO, D/P 73/1/1, Mountnessing St Giles, parish register.
4. ERO, D/P 114/1/2, Danbury St John's, parish register.
5. *ibid.*
6. ERO, D/P 246/1/5, Colchester St Mary-at-the-Walls, parish register.
7. *Chelmsford Chronicle* (C.Ch.), 21/06/1776, p.3 & 28/06/1776, p.4.
8. In an advertisement (C.Ch., 15/08/1788, p.3) White states that he has been teaching for 12 years.
9. C.Ch., 16/07/1784, p.3.
10. C.Ch., 24/06/1785, p.3.
11. Michael Boyle opened his school on 27th March 1775, *Ipswich Journal* (I.J.), 28/01/1775, p.3. Before coming to Colchester, he had taught at Mr Carter's school in Ipswich.
12. See ERO, Acc. C16, Box 2, financial receipts signed by Peter Daniell.
13. Lambeth Palace Library, Fulham Papers, Porteus vol.XII, f.179. An English school is one where all the lessons were in English, whereas at a grammar school some lessons were in Latin.
14. ERO, Q/RPI, 1112, 1113, Land Tax Assessment for Colchester.
15. C.Ch., 30/12/1785, p.3.
16. ERO, D/DHt/T337/4, deeds of the King's Head Inn, St Mary-at-the-Walls, Colchester. Mentioned in the deeds are White's uncle, Richard Rowland, and his brother, Christopher Penny White, who was landlord of the White Hart Inn in Colchester's High Street between 1782–1786 (see G.O. Rickword, *Essex Review*, 1947, 56, pp.215–217).
17. I.J., 06/01/1787, p.3.
18. Proprietors of schools used the adjective 'proper' to indicate a master or mistress was suitably qualified and experienced.
19. C.Ch., 14/12/1787, p.3.
20. I.J., 31/01/1789, p.3.
21. I.J., 26/01/1788, p.3.
22. I.J., 22/03/1788, p.3 & C.Ch., 21/03/1788, p.3.
23. C.Ch., 16/05/1788, p.3. In the eighteenth century, many private schools were regarded as quite large when they had more than 30 pupils.
24. C.Ch., 15/08/1788, p.3.
25. I.J., 31/01/1789, p.3.
26. With the increase in the demand for education from those who could not afford to send their children to school in the day, a growing number of masters towards the end of the eighteenth century were holding evening classes to help alleviate the situation.
27. I.J., 19/12/1789, p.2.
28. C.Ch., 17/12/1790, p.2.
29. C.Ch., 17/06/1791, p.3.
30. T.White, *White's Corn Measure Tables, shewing the difference in price, per Quarter, of Corn, &c. when sold by the Standard Winchester Bushel, of Eight Gallons*, (Colchester, 1792). Copy in the British Library, catalogue number 1027 i 22.
31. C.Ch., 21/09/1791, p.1.
32. C.Ch., 30/09/1791, p.2.
33. C.Ch., 06/01/1792, p.1.
34. C.Ch., 22/06/1792, p.3.
35. C.Ch., 26/12/1794, p.3; I.J., 27/12/1794, p.3.
36. C.Ch., 21/06/1799, p.2. There were strict rules concerning who could join and benefit from the charity. It would seem that the charity was well supported by schoolmasters in Essex.
37. C.Ch., 27/12/1793, p.2.
38. *ibid.*, Byatt Walker taught at Sible Headingham for a few months and then became the master of the Blue Coat School in Colchester (July 1794 to December 1801). A few years later he opened his own school in Colchester, which for much of its lifetime was situated in Sir Isaac's Walk.
39. I.J., 27/12/1794, p.3.
40. I.J., 16/12/1797, p.3. Count de Suberville taught fencing, Count de Berenger French, and M. de Gerville Latin, Italian and geography. The advertisement states that the first two had been teaching for some while in Colchester. Perhaps they are the two Frenchmen whom White employed.
41. I.J., 27/06/1795, p.1.
42. I.J., 18/06/1796, p.3.
43. I.J., 06/01/1798, p.3.
44. C.Ch., 20/09/1799, p.3.
45. I.J., 28/12/99, p.3.
46. I.J., 03/01/1801, p.3.
47. I.J., 28/12/1799, p.3.
48. I.J., 26/06/1802, p.3.
49. C.Ch., 23/12/1803, p.3.
50. I.J., 18/08/1804, p.2.
51. The National Archives, PROB 11/1416. The will was signed on 30/07/1803 and proved on 05/10/1804.
52. C.Ch., 24/08/1804, p.3.
53. C.Ch., 28/12/1804, p.3.
54. I.J., 18/01/1806, p.3.
55. I.J., 09/05/1812, p.2.
56. J.A.Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Part II, Vol. VI, (Cambridge, 1954), p.441.
57. *ibid.*, p.438.
58. It would seem that the clerk in copying the will made a mistake or omitted a word or two. The actual wording is 'my celestial and terris'. As White stated in an advertisement that he had globes (celestial and terrestrial), it is reasonable to assume that this is what he intended.
59. Almost certainly the artist is William Redmore Bigg (1755–1828), who was well known for his genre scenes. Two of his pictures, *Black Monday* or *The Departure for School* and *Dulce Domum* or *Return from School* were amongst those engraved. He may have drawn them because of his friendship with Thomas White.
60. P. Benton, *The History of Rochford Hundred*, Vol. II, (Rochford, 1888), p.681. I am grateful to Mr Noel Beer for this piece of information.
61. See *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. LXI, (Oxford, 2004), pp.78–79.

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## The Author

After obtaining an honours degree in history at Trinity College, Dublin, David Tomlinson worked in publishing for a number of years before training to be a teacher of primary school children. Since his retirement he has at last had sufficient time to achieve one of his ambitions – to undertake historical research.

# The Benefits of a Life in Service:

## Audley End c.1881

by

Andrew Hann

**A**s part of a project to open up the service wing at Audley End to visitors English Heritage commissioned new research into service life at the house during the 1880s. This article reports on some of the findings of this research, focusing particularly on the servants themselves. It is often assumed that working at a great country house was a life of deference and drudgery, with long working hours, strict rules of behaviour and a rigid social hierarchy. The rich archive of household accounts at Audley End allows us to examine these premises delving into the lives of the servants who inhabited the house during the late nineteenth century and learning something of their living and working conditions. The article concentrates on three related areas. Firstly it assesses the generosity of the wages paid to servants at Audley End and the other perquisites they received. Secondly it examines evidence about the servants' diet, and thirdly looks at the turnover of staff and what implications can be drawn from this about the attractiveness of domestic service as a career.

**Wages and living conditions**  
Wages for different categories of servant varied widely across the country even in the later nineteenth century due to the differing size and complexity of service households and the many different specialist tasks they performed. A hierarchy of wage rates denoting position within the service hierarchy was well established by this period, but there was no clear scale of payments for a particular set of tasks.<sup>1</sup> We have a good record of wages paid to servants at Audley End between 1851 and 1872 from a surviving receipt book.<sup>2</sup> This shows a wide range of different payment levels from £120 per year for the cook to £10 for the scullery maid and hall boy. As one would expect wage rates tended to be linked to age and experience so that the 36 year old first kitchen maid received £20, whilst the 25 year old second kitchen maid got £16. The wage levels, particularly for female servants, appear quite good compared with those found on comparable aristocratic estates in the south of England. They also compare favourably with wage levels recommended by

nineteenth century household management guides.<sup>3</sup>

In general female servants earned less than their male colleagues even when they had similar responsibilities. Male cooks, for instance, commanded salaries of £100 a year or more, whereas their female counterparts got less than half this. To illustrate the point Lord Braybrooke hired an inexperienced female cook, 25 year old Priscilla Conway in early 1871, agreeing with her an annual salary of £40. When she left his employment some two months later her successor John Merer was offered wages of £120 per year. Similarly a butler would typically receive a half to a third more than a housekeeper. At Audley End the butler was paid £80 and the housekeeper £50, both good salaries for the time. Valets also got more than ladies' maids even though they performed a similar role.

As well as their annual salary servants at Audley End, as elsewhere, received money allowances, for tea and sugar in the early nineteenth century, and by the 1870s and 1880s for washing and beer. Beer money paid in lieu of the provision of



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Position	Audley End 1851, £, s	Audley End 1871, £	Beeton 1861, £
Housekeeper	35	50	20-45
Lady's Maid	20	23	12-25
1st House Maid	16	20	12-20
2nd House Maid	12	16	8-12
Stillroom Maid	18	16	9-14
Kitchen Maid	18	20	9-14
1st Laundry Maid	18	20	12-18
2nd Laundry Maid	14	16	9-14
Dairy Maid	15	-	-
House Steward	80	80	25-50
<i>Cook</i>	100	120	20-40
<i>Valet</i>	50	50	25-50
<i>Under Butler</i>	26,5	35	15-30
<i>Lord's Footman</i>	26,5	30	20-40
<i>Lady's Footman</i>	26,5	28	
<i>Groom</i>	20	18	15-30
<i>Coachman</i>	31,10	35	30
<i>House Boy</i>	14	10	6-12

**Table 1. Servants' wages at Audley End 1851 and 1871 in comparison with recommendations by Mrs Beeton 1861. Male employees in italics. Ref: ERO, D/DBy/A395, receipt book; Beeton, 1866 and 1906.**

beer was determined by gender, status and age. At Erdigg in 1905 the butler got 8s per week, the housekeeper, nurse and footmen 6s, maids 4s and hall-boy only 2s.<sup>4</sup> At Audley End expenditure on four weeks' beer money came to around £15, and four weeks' washing money to £1.4s – fairly considerable sums.<sup>5</sup> Resourceful servants would save up their

money allowances for special occasions or to buy new clothes. Indeed by combining cash allowances for beer, tea, sugar and washing with seasonal board wages it was quite easy for servants to accumulate substantial savings. Outdoor servants were often allowed firewood, vegetables or coal. Vails, which were tips from departing guests, were

another source of income for some servants. Edwardian manservants in great houses expected visiting gentlemen to tip a sovereign (£1). However, only staff having direct contact with visitors or their servants could count on vails. Servants could also often count on paternal benevolence and bequests in the wills of former employers. These various gifts, perquisites, vails and tips were lucrative and enabled many servants of great houses to live a relatively comfortable lifestyle.

The servants were provided with food when the family was in residence eating either in the butler's room or the servants' hall depending on their status and role within the household. Servants remaining behind when the family was away from Audley End received board wages and were expected to provide for themselves. They would have been able to find everything they needed either in Audley End village or the nearby town of Saffron Walden. William Cowell ran a grocery store in the village, and regularly provided goods to the estate throughout the 1870s and 80s. Servants would have spent their money on basic groceries such as tea, sugar, flour etc, on beer at the local alehouse, and on entertainment. As Lord and Lady Braybrooke were generally only in residence from mid-July until late February board wages were required for more than half of the year. There were, however, relatively few recipients since only a skeleton staff remained at the house when the family was away: the housekeeper, laundry maids, dairy maid and two or three housemaids. In 1878 their board wage payments amounted to £20-30 per month.<sup>6</sup> Opportunities for social activities would though have been relatively limited due to their long hours and the strict control over their movements exercised by the housekeeper, Mrs Warwick. The servants did, however, receive two annual treats: a Christmas dinner on

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27th December in the Servants' Hall and a Servants' Ball in mid-January. In 1875 the former was attended by 37 guests, the latter by 52 – possibly estate workers and their families. The higher ranking servants had a separate treat, the Stewards Room New Year Party on January 1st with 11 guests.<sup>7</sup>

Overall, the impression one gets is that employment in service at a great house such as Audley End could be financially rewarding even for those of relatively modest status within the service hierarchy. Wages were relatively good when compared with those available in agriculture and many craft or industrial occupations or to servants working for middle class households. However, it was the possibility of accruing additional income from cash allowances, treats and board

wages that made working for an aristocratic employer such an attractive proposition. Moreover those at the bottom of the pile could aspire to work their way up the hierarchy so long as they worked hard and were willing to move on for advancement.

## Diet and nutrition

There is now a substantial body of evidence to support the argument that domestic servants in nineteenth century Britain were generally healthier, taller and longer lived than many of their working class contemporaries.<sup>8</sup> One of the main reasons suggested for this was their better diet. At Audley End the survival of several 'consumption books' detailing the food consumed by the household during the 1850s and 1860s allows these assumptions to be empirically tested.<sup>9</sup>

These ledgers confirm that the food eaten by Lord Braybrooke's servants was in some ways similar to that consumed by the family themselves, though the style of dining would of course have been much simpler. The consumption book of 1868–69, for instance, shows that substantial quantities of meat were consumed in the servants' hall. During November 1868 the servants ate on average 268lb 8oz of meat per week. This works out at around 1lb 2oz per person per day, or between a third and a half the amount of meat eaten by the Braybrooke family and their guests during this period. Beef, mutton and pork were the staple of the servants' diet, just as they were for the Braybrookes, but unlike the family the servants rarely had veal. Quantities of meat eaten by the servants varied during the



The kitchen at Audley End now restored to how it would have looked in 1881.

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Position	Audley End 1851, £	Lamport Hall 1851, £	Audley End 1871, £	Great Billing 1873, £
Housekeeper	35	40 (c+h)	50	
1st Laundry Maid	18	15	20	20
2nd Laundry Maid	14		16	14
1st House Maid	16	14	20	16
2nd House Maid	12	9	16	12
Stillroom Maid	18		16	
1st Kitchen Maid	18	10	20	16
2nd Kitchen Maid	12		16	
Scullery Maid	10		10	8
Dairy Maid	15	9		
<i>Butler</i>	80	47	80	60
<i>Cook</i>	100	40 (fem)	120	45 (fem)
<i>Groom of the Chamber/Valet</i>	50		50	
<i>Under Butler</i>	25, 5		35	
<i>Footman</i>	26, 5	17	30	28
<i>House/Hall Boy</i>	14		10	12
<i>Coachman</i>	31	52	35	40

Comparison between servants' wages at Audley End House and Lamport Hall 1851 and Audley End 1871 and Great Billing 1873. Male employees in italics except: (c+h)=cook+housekeeper; (fem) = the cook at Lamport Hall and Great Billing who were women with a different salary scale.

week from around 12oz to 11b 9oz, with helpings on Sundays generally the most generous. During November 1868 the household as a whole also consumed on average one turkey, two ducks, three pheasants, five chickens, five hares, 17 rabbits, 17 partridges, 138 eggs and 17lb of butter per week, although it is not known how much of this fare found its way onto the servants' table. The day of the servants' Christmas dinner may though provide some indication. On this

day, 26th December, 55 people dined in the servants' hall, but only ten in the dining room. Food consumed included two pheasants, four rabbits, six turkeys, 70 eggs and 8lb of butter. It is easy to imagine that most of the eggs and butter, plus the turkeys probably went towards the servant's fare.

Compared with other people of similar status (farm labourers, artisans and factory hands) this was a relatively rich diet, one of the main perks of working at a

great house. Evidence from Parliamentary reports, and the dietaries provided for workhouses reveal that most working people consumed considerably less meat and more bread, potatoes and vegetables. An 1866 report into the dietaries of workhouse inmates found that most provided adult male inmates with between 4oz and 6oz of meat per day, accompanied by 7oz to 20oz of potatoes and fresh vegetables. Pork was the meat most readily available to the labouring classes,

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although beef was considered more nutritious.<sup>10</sup>

The monetary value of the food provided to servants can be gleaned from the amounts paid out in board wages – weekly cash payments given to indoor servants for buying their own meals and provisions when the family was absent. Typically board wages were 10s a week for lower men, 9s for lower women, and 12–17s for upper servants. By the 1890s typical board wages had risen to 11s per week or more. This compares favourably with the average weekly wages of agricultural labourers in the Home Counties which stood at 11s.8d in 1867–70 and 12s.10d in 1892.<sup>11</sup> Labourers, of course, would also have had to find money for rent and fuel out of their meagre income, costs which could amount to between 8 and 15% of their total expenditure.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, most labourers had to support a family whereas the majority of servants were unmarried.

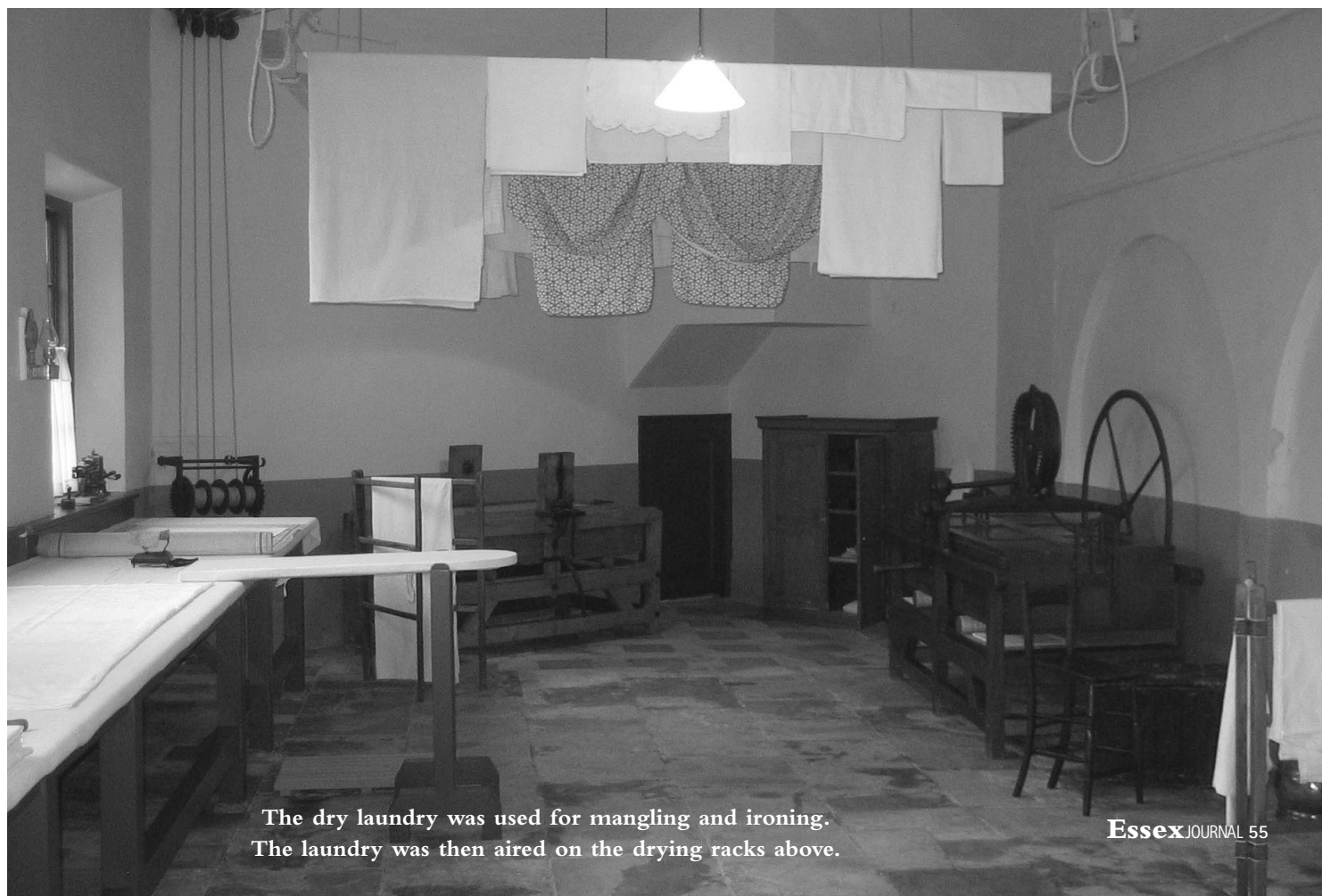
## Staff turnover

Turnover of staff at Audley End was high though this should

not be seen as evidence of dissatisfaction with wages and working conditions. Rather it is a reflection of the fact that servants were a youthful and highly mobile sector of the population, often choosing to move on in order to further their career. A glance at the biographies of some of the servants working at Audley End in 1881 illustrates this point quite neatly. For instance, the cook Avis Crocombe was born into a farming family in Devon in the late 1830s. She worked first for her brother, John Crocombe, who farmed 130 acres, but by 1851 was kitchen maid in the smart London residence of a gentleman in St James' Square. In 1871 Avis, now 33, was cook and housekeeper to Thomas Proctor Beauchamp of Langley Hall in Norfolk, before arriving at Audley End as cook in the late 1870s. First kitchen maid Mary Ann Bulmer showed a similar pattern of career progression having previously worked as general servant for Jane Wharton, a lodging house keeper of 15 Crown Terrace in Scarborough. Indeed the Audley End accounts show relatively

few examples of servants being promoted within the household suggesting that most had to move elsewhere if they wished to advance up the career ladder. Furthermore, all those who remained in post for a lengthy period were in senior positions. For instance, the butler William Lincoln served Lord Braybrooke from the mid-1870s until at least 1901, whilst Mary Withers was housekeeper from at least the mid 1860s until June 1871.

Another factor influencing the high turnover of staff was undoubtedly the growing feminisation of domestic service from the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup> As early as 1758 John Fielding was commenting in the *London Chronicle* that 'women have but few trades, and fewer manufactures to employ them. Hence it is, that the general resource of young women is to go to service.'<sup>14</sup> By the 1880s service was largely the preserve of young unmarried women, a highly mobile group. In 1851 there were 783,543 female servants in England compared with 124,595 males: of these women 40% were aged under 19,



The dry laundry was used for mangling and ironing. The laundry was then aired on the drying racks above.

# The Benefits of a Life in Service



**The stone floor and benches, and glazed tiles on the walls helped keep the temperature in the dairy constant at around 55 degrees F.**

and 66% under 24.<sup>15</sup> Girls often went into service at 13 or 14, and left when they married, usually after the age of 24. This explains the relatively young age profile of the servant body at Audley End, which was typical of great houses up and down the country. Apart from the cook and housekeeper, only the dairy maid Fanny Cowley was over 30 years old. Servants of higher rank were sometimes allowed to remain in service after marriage, though this privilege was more often afforded to men, and for most wedlock brought the end of their service career.<sup>16</sup> For instance, in 1881 only the clerk of works, land steward, head gardener and gamekeeper were married. Most higher ranking female servants remained unmarried like the cook, Avis Crocombe, who was 43 in 1881, or were widows like the housekeeper, Elizabeth Warwick.

There was also, of course, the

possibility of dismissal. If we are to believe the evidence from diaries, journals and biographies, servants as a body were generally unscrupulous, inefficient, immoral, unreliable and dishonest women. They rarely satisfied their employers, regularly stole from them, they were for ever getting pregnant, being dismissed or moving on. This is, of course, a caricature, but it holds some grains of truth. Certainly the level of turnover in some of the more junior posts at Audley End indicates that some recruits lasted only a matter of months in their post. For instance, Elizabeth Norval served as second kitchen maid only from January to April 1871, whilst her successor Fanny Clark lasted for less than two months.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately the absence of correspondence amongst the surviving archives leaves us only to guess at the reasons for their early departure.

## Conclusions

Far from being a dead end job or life of drudgery, domestic service was an attractive career option, particularly for women who were by the later Victorian period denied entry to many other occupations. Wages were relatively good even for those in junior positions, living and working conditions more comfortable than those of most other working people, and career progression a real possibility. In these circumstances the mobility of the servant labour force can be seen more as a reflection of a dynamic labour market, a sign of flexibility as much as job insecurity. For many young women and men working for a great country house such as Audley End was simply a formative stage in their life prior to marriage, but for many others it was part of a rewarding and lucrative career.

# The Benefits of a Life in Service

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr Beatrice Moring who did the preliminary social history research for English Heritage, and the staff at Essex Record Office

## The Author

Andrew Hann is a Senior Properties Historian at English Heritage specialising in researching the country houses within EH's portfolio of properties. Previously he worked as County Editor of the Victoria County History of Kent, and before that as a university-based researcher. His research interests include the history of retailing and consumption, landed estates, urban and industrial change and the writing of community histories.

## Audley End Opening times:

### House:

Closed 1 Nov – 31 Mar except for Festive Fun Weekends (22-23 Nov, 29-30 Nov, 6-7 Dec, 13-14 Dec)

### Gardens & Service Wing:

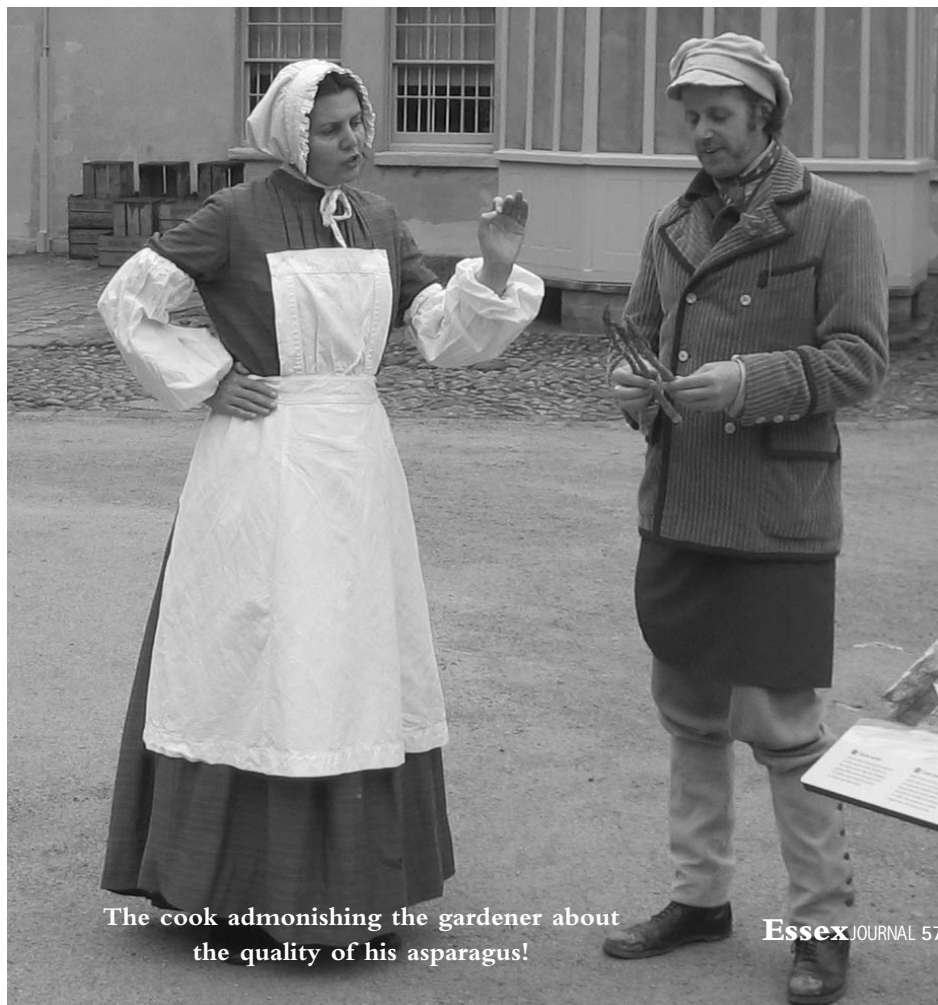
1 – 31 Oct, Wed-Sun  
10am-5pm  
1 Nov – 23 Dec, Wed-Sun 10am – 4pm  
Closed  
24 Dec – 31 Jan  
1 –28 Feb, Wed-Sun  
10am – 4pm  
1 –31 Mar, Wed – Sun 10am-5pm

## Prices:

**House& Gardens:** Adults £10.50, Concession £8.40, Child £5.30, Family £26.30

**Garden only:** Adult £5.50, Concession £4.50, Child £2.80, Family £13.80

**Garden & service wing:** (Tickets available 1 Nov – 31 Mar only): Adult £7.50, Concession £6.00, Child £3.80, £18.80



The cook admonishing the gardener about the quality of his asparagus!

# Jack Humphreys - the Wivenhoe Flyer:

## the man behind the machine

by  
**Chris Thompson**

**I**n recent years there has been renewed interest in the series of strange aerial experiments that took place on the River Colne at Wivenhoe in 1909–10 when Jack Humphreys (Plate 1), a London dentist, took to the water, if not to the air, in a strange machine that he called an ‘aerohydroplane’. We would now term this an amphibian, inasmuch as it had a wheeled undercarriage as well as a flying-boat hull. Later, as we shall see, this was developed into a series of landplanes, the last of which, known as ‘The Elephant’, was eventually transferred to Brooklands in Surrey. This article will look at the life and times of this pioneer aviator, a story that starts far from Essex in the burgeoning British colony of Hong Kong in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Hong Kong had been acquired in 1842, after the Opium Wars of 1839–42, caused in the main by Chinese reluctance to open up the country to the west; a policy that clashed with British ambitions for free trade in the region. By the end of the nineteenth century Hong Kong had a population of some 300,000 Chinese and some 20,000 Europeans. The latter in their smart villas shared the island with a rising Chinese bourgeoisie and a coolie underclass which served as a sort of urban proletariat. The subject of this article, Jack Edmund Humphreys, was born into this variegated mixture on the 21st February 1875. One of nine children of which only three survived, he was the son of John David Humphreys, described as a chemist, and Jepie Humphreys (nee Lambert). As her name would suggest, the family are certainly of the opinion that Jack’s mother was partly Chinese, although when she was living in Britain the 1881 census gives her

forename as “Jessie” which may have been an attempt to anglicise the family lineage. Jack’s father’s family had made their money in the opium trade in Canton and were, in a strange touch of irony, also involved in the medical service; John David Humphreys becoming one of the lessees of the Hong Kong Dispensary in



**Plate 1. A publicity leaflet of the period showing Jack Humphreys. (Author’s collection).**

1871 four years before Jack’s birth. Subsequently the business (now A.S. Watson & Co.) expanded throughout the Far East with the establishment of a pharmacy and soft drinks factory in Manila in 1883 and concurrent expansion into the Chinese mainland.

This background would have given young Jack Edmund an insight into the medical and pharmaceutical world that evidently inspired him to become a ‘society’ dentist, and in the 1880s he was living in Britain with his mother and his two elder brothers where they had a house in Clapham. It is uncertain what had prompted the move to London, but this may have been a temporary move to enable the boys to get a good education and establish themselves in middle-class circles. Certainly in 1891 there is no census record of the family in the UK. We do know,

however, that Jack was first registered as a Licentiate of Dental Surgery on 23rd November 1900 with the qualifications LDS RCS that he had obtained in 1896. He then appears to have moved around London’s west end, occupying a series of surgeries from which he catered for ‘the smart set’. The 1901 census records him as living at Taplow in Buckinghamshire with his wife, Violet, one small daughter, Effie, and his sisters-in-law who are listed as ‘surgical nurses’. In later years, at the height of his aviation experiments, he became known as the ‘mad dentist’.

Jack’s interest in aviation seems to have started in the early years of the century. He

had always been a strong swimmer and, eschewing the catapult launching apparatus used by some of his contemporaries, his early gliding experiments were from cliff-top sites. Some of these are known to have been at Coombe Farm at Fowey, situated to the south of that town in property now owned by the National Trust. However by 1909 he had transferred his operations to Wivenhoe, no doubt attracted by that port’s reputation as a boat-building centre. His company, the British Aeroplanes Syndicate Limited, had erected a workshop near the Wivenhoe end of the ferry across the Colne, opposite the Ship inn at Rowhedge (Plate 2). His amphibian flying boat was first launched on 27th March 1909 with a second test a week later on 3rd April when the whole contrivance collapsed into the water taking the unhappy dentist with it. Luckily only his pride was hurt. Other tests of the ‘aerohydroplane’ took place in April and May, none of which resulted in lift-off, although modifications to the body of the machine were

# Jack Humphreys - the Wivenhoe Flyer:

carried out to give it more stability in the water. The general appearance of the machine can be gleaned by the excellent model made by Bill Ellis of Wivenhoe (Plate 3). Jack then embarked on a series of landplane designs based on the unfortunate amphibian. Inspired in some measure by a prize offered by the Daily Mail he pursued his endeavours with the new design. A field near Alresford Creek was levelled to provide a rudimentary runway and taxiing tests were carried out in October 1909, culminating in the machine crashing into a drainage ditch and demolishing the undercarriage. In November the latest of the series of landplanes failed owing to faulty

undercarriage design and the monoplane followed the unhappy course of his predecessors – to be broken up in the Wivenhoe shed. A new design was then embarked upon, based very largely on Hubert Latham's 'Antoinette' and it was this monoplane that Jack transferred to Brooklands in April 1910.

During the time of his Wivenhoe experiments Jack had not been idle in promoting aviation generally. We know that he was at the Aero Club banquet held at the Ritz Hotel in May 1909 held in honour of the Wright brothers, who were also present. Later in 1910 he was a contributor towards the Rolls Memorial Library to

commemorate the life of C.S. Rolls who had died in a flying accident earlier that year. The following year saw him writing an acerbic reply in *Flight* magazine to a gentleman who had dared to suggest that a landowner also owned the airspace above his holding and that these 'suicidal maniacs' of aviators were in fact committing a trespass when flying overhead, i.e. 'no man of common sense will submit to the danger of being flown over'. Jack's reply was short and to the point and included the very prescient comment – 'Everyone who has made any study of the subject is fully aware that the day is not far distant when the very safety of this country will depend as much on air as on sea supremacy.'<sup>1</sup>

How much attention Jack himself had made to the study of aerodynamics is open to question. His amphibian and landplane designs whilst he was at Wivenhoe had not achieved flight, sustained or otherwise, and although the monoplane that went to Brooklands did eventually fly, indeed somewhat prematurely during taxiing trials in the hands of the well-known aviator Gordon Bell, it did not really achieve any flights of long duration nor was it judged successful enough to progress beyond the prototype stage.

Jack himself was to be involved in one or two crashes whilst at Brooklands, notably in a machine belonging to the Hanriot Flying School, and a mechanic was seriously injured whilst working on the Humphreys monoplane. These events, coupled with criticism of him as a designer, together with a severe diminution of resources, seem to have driven Jack from the flying scene. Certainly Jack Humphreys' name does not appear in any list of pilots receiving their Aviators' Certificates prior to the First World War, although he remained on the fringe of the aviation world for many years.

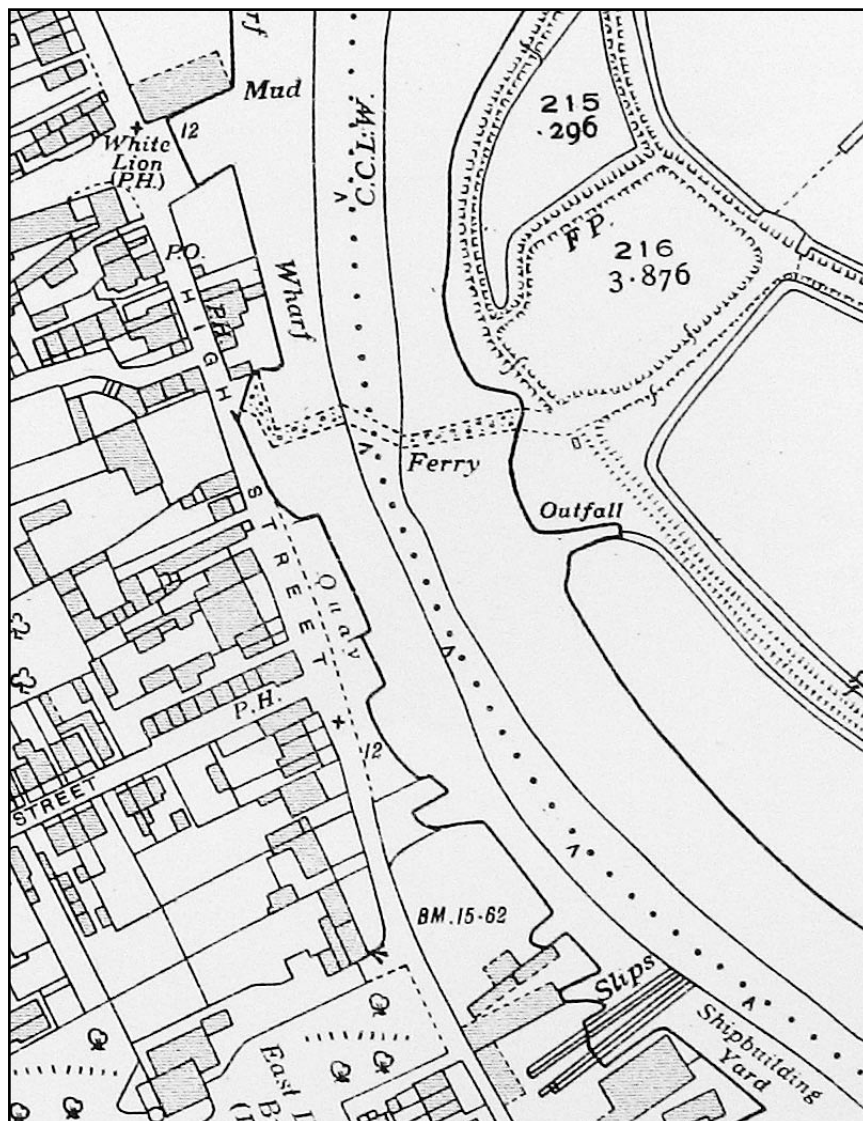
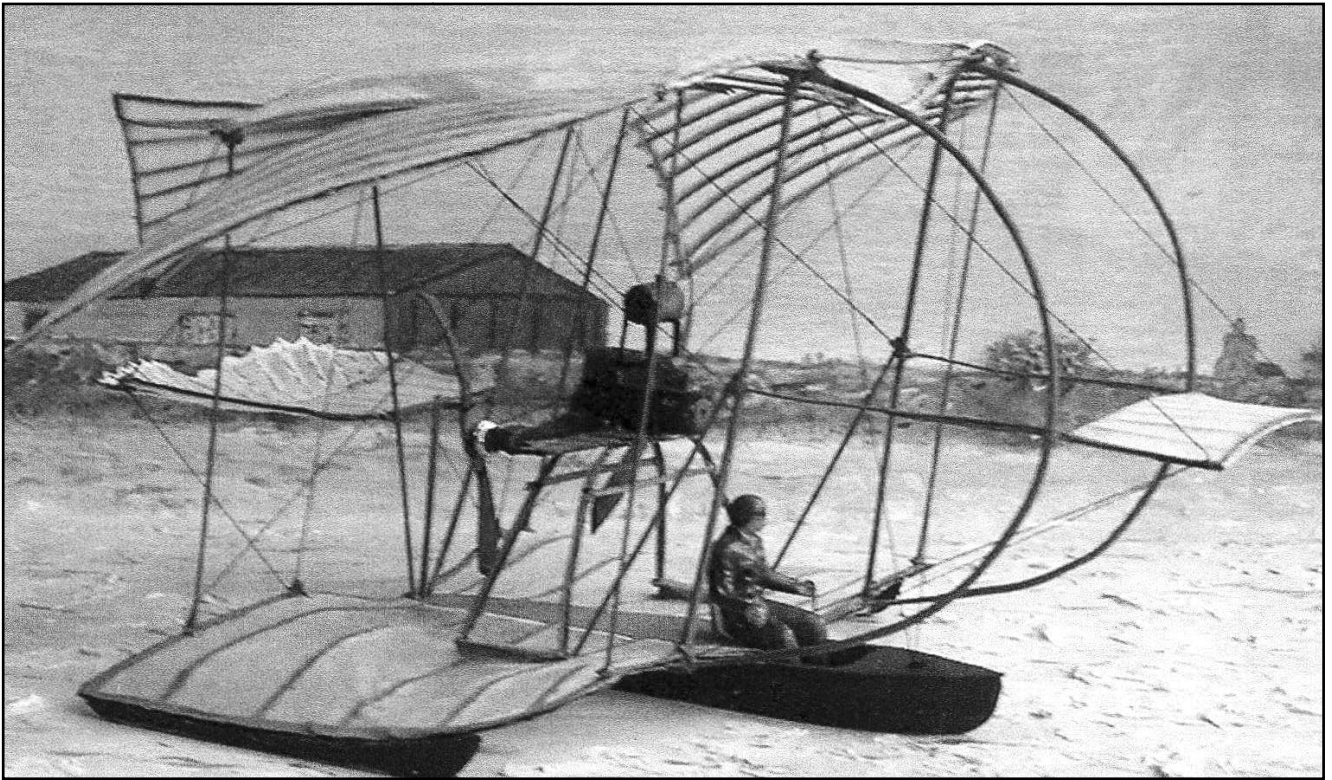


Plate 2. NS 25 inch Ordnance Survey map 37-12, 1936, showing the area of the Rowdhedge Ferry, Jack Humphrey's workshop being on the Wivenhoe bank at this point. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office).

# Jack Humphreys - the Wivenhoe Flyer:



**Plate 3. A model of the 'aerohydroplane' built by Mr Bill Ellis of Wivenhoe (Author's collection).**

His name is listed, for instance, in 1915 as being one of the contributors to the Flying Services Fund administered by the Royal Aero Club for the benefit of officers and men of the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service incapacitated whilst on active service.

## tending to the needs of wealthy socialite ladies

From the start of the First World War Jack Humphreys seems to have concentrated more upon his smart dental practice in London, specialising (so the family say) on tending to the needs of wealthy socialite ladies. He also pioneered facial plastic surgery on those wounded in the war. He had two children by his first wife Violet Muriel Maitland-King, and five children by his second wife and former house-keeper. One of these latter children, Jack David Humphreys, became a Squadron Leader in the Second World War and was killed flying a Hudson aircraft over

France in 1942. By the time of that conflict Jack Edmund Humphreys was living in a large house in Wimbledon. During this time he had a dream that the house would be bombed and moved the whole family out. Several days later this happened and the house was demolished. Despite this burst of clairvoyance, it is said that he was somewhat absent-minded, and there is a story that he set out for the bus-stop one day dressed in a top-coat, bowler hat, and sock suspenders but minus his trousers; his maid running after him with the missing garments. Nevertheless Jack lived to the age of 88, dying in 1963.

However misconceived some of Jack Humphreys' designs may have been there is little doubt that he was a colourful character who deserves to be remembered. Had his amphibian lifted-off from the waters of the Colne in the spring of 1909 it would have constituted the first water-born take-off by a heavier-than-air machine in Britain, and would have put him in contention for the first Briton to fly from home soil in a machine of his own design.

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## Acknowledgements

Much of the information in this article is based on the author's own researches and grateful thanks must go to local enthusiasts Mr Daniel Simons, Mr John Stewart, Mr Glen Jackson and to Mr Bill Ellis whose model of the 'aerohydroplane' is used in the illustration. Also to Ms Caroline Tilbury and Mr Brian Westwood whose Internet researches proved invaluable, and to Mr Peter Humphreys, Jack's grandson from New Zealand who supplied memories of his grandfather.

## The Author

Chris Thompson is a retired college administrator with an MA from the University of Kent and a lifelong interest in engineering and aviation history. He is a past contributor to *Essex Journal* and to other specialist magazines. He divides his time between Britain and France and is Vice-Chair of the Friends of Braintree & District Museum. He is currently working on a larger biography of the man who is the subject of this article.

## William Raymond Powell (1920-2008)

**R**ay Powell, one of the most distinguished and prolific historians of the county of Essex over the last half century, died in the Norwich Spire Hospital on 21st July. During the period 1951 to 1986, when he served as Editor of the Victoria County History of Essex, he produced six large volumes in the series plus two bibliographical tomes and numerous additional historical contributions elsewhere.

The son of the Rev McAuley Powell, a Methodist minister, and his wife Nancy, he was born at Highbridge in Somerset in 1920. However, when he was six years of age his mother died in South Africa, where his father had taken up a missionary post. His father married again – Olive Girdler – the daughter of another Methodist minister, at least three of whose descendants also became Methodist ministers. Not surprisingly, Ray's attitude to work and morality was influenced by his nonconformist background.

He won a scholarship to study history at Merton College, Oxford, in 1939, but volunteered for the RAF before completing the course. Until demobilisation he served as a radar operator and instructor in Britain, West Africa, Belgium and Germany. After resuming his studies and graduating, he obtained a post as an Assistant Editor of the Victoria County History series. This project, originally launched in 1899 and still going today, aims to provide each English county with a detailed general and topographical history. The scheme had run aground, for financial reasons, after the production of the earlier volumes, but new county committees were set up during the post-war period, to complete the work with finance provided by local authorities.

Ray Powell initially worked on Wiltshire, but when the Essex Committee was established in 1951 he was appointed as its Editor. The Essex files, containing slips in parish envelopes, had been stored in the basement of the National Central Library, which had been bombed during the war. To separate these from the records of other counties and cope with the problems of dust, leaking pipes and inadequate lighting was no easy task. However, the Essex Record Office (founded in 1938) was already collecting and cataloguing a steady flow of previously unseen documents which provided an abundance of new information.

Ray now planned a series of new volumes. In concert with his assistant, Audrey Taylor, and

an editorial sub-committee, he recruited the help of Essex Record Office employees, local historians and committed volunteers to produce them. He encouraged them all. Volume IV on the Ongar Hundred appeared in 1956, the first bibliography in 1959, and Volume III on Roman Essex in 1963. Volumes covering Metropolitan Essex, including West Ham, East Ham, Barking & Dagenham, Walthamstow, Leyton, Chingford and Ilford followed. Havering (including Romford), Epping, and Harlow & District, came next. A second bibliography volume appeared in 1987, just after Ray retired. Bearing in mind recurrent financial problems, this was a great achievement.

Retirement removed the restrictions on his work, but he did not slacken his pace. During the course of the next 22 years, he produced an authoritative biography of the brilliant but quarrelsome Essex historian, John Horace Round, a series of other studies, and a total of 53 articles. The last of these is still to be published in the next edition of *Transactions of the Essex Society for Archaeology & History*. Though trained as a mediaevalist, he never confined himself to the mediaeval period. He produced a number of short books: *Local History from Blue Books*, *Essex in Domesday*, *Keir Hardie in West Ham* (republished by the Socialist History Society), and he wrote for the *Essex Journal*, the *English Historical Review*, the *Pipe Roll Series*, *Archives*, *The Antiquaries Journal*, as well as the *Transactions of the Essex Society for Archaeology & History*.

Ray Powell was a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and he served as President and in other capacities in the Essex Society for Archaeology & History. He was also a very active Secretary of the Essex Branch of the Historical Association.

He married Avril Johnson in 1942 and she survives him. A scholar in her own right, she worked with him on several projects, including a second edition of *A Mediaeval Farming Glossary* of Latin and English words, originally produced by Canon John Fisher. He is also survived by three children and six grandchildren.

William Raymond Powell, historian, born Somerset, 5th December, 1920. Married 1942 Avril Johnson (3 sons, 1 deceased; 1 daughter). Died Norwich, 21st July, 2008.

Stan Newens

## Kenneth Hall (1947-2008)

**I**t was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Ken Hall on 12th June. Ken had retired as County Archivist in 2003, but continued to live in Great Sampford. His funeral took place at the parish church of St Mary the Virgin, Little Sampford on 20th June. Many Essex Record Office staff and former colleagues from the archive profession were present.

Ken had taken up the post of County Archivist of Essex on 1st April 1993, having previously been County Archivist of Durham (1976-9) and of Lancashire (1979-93). He had started his archival career at West Suffolk Record Office in 1969.

Foremost amongst Ken's achievements whilst County Archivist of Essex was the building of the new Record Office in Wharf Road, still cited as a state-of-the-art archive building after eight years. Ken was very keen to increase public access to our rich manuscript collections, and therefore extended

Searchroom opening hours and initiated our digitization programme. Based on his experience in Lancashire Ken encouraged the involvement of volunteers in Record Office projects, and set up the Wills Volunteer Scheme in association with the Friends of Historic Essex. Many will also remember the enjoyable palaeography courses which Ken ran for several years.

Ken was well known in the world of archives, acting as Chairman of the Society of Archivists from 1987 to 1989 and a member of the Executive Committee of the International Council on Archives. He was also Director of an archival survey for climate history on behalf of UNESCO, the ICA, and the World Meteorological Organisation.

Jenny Butler,  
Principle Archivist  
Essex Record Office

### Ken Hall – a personal memory

**I** had the privilege of working for Ken Hall for the whole time that he was County Archivist from 1993 to 2003. At the time of his appointment we all wondered whether anyone could live up to the high standards set by his three predecessors, F G Emmison, Ken Newton and Vic Gray. We need not have worried; Ken packed a very considerable achievement into his comparatively short period in office. His life was tragically short, but he left behind a substantial legacy.

Building on initial foundations laid by Vic Gray, Ken secured the funding for, and saw through to completion, not one, but two major projects. For those of us involved it was a busy, exciting and stimulating time. The new Record Office building owes its visual style to the architect, but it was Ken who ensured that it was built to the correct archival standards, and that it contained the right amount of space and range of facilities. In particular I remember that he insisted that the searchroom should be considerably larger than originally proposed, thus creating the spectacular open space that we now have.

Ken was there at the beginning of SEAX, the computerised cataloguing and management system, and supported and encouraged every aspect of its development. It is not too much to say that, if this had not been ready by the time the new building was completed, the searchroom service would have found it difficult to function. Such has been the

speed of IT development that Ken and his colleagues first saw SEAX as no more than a way of producing better paper catalogues and indexes more efficiently, but that, by the time of his retirement, it had become a database that can be searched on line and over the Internet, and included digital images.

Not content with these two developments, Ken succeeded in keeping the ERO at the forefront of developments in every other area. Mention has been made of his introduction of extended opening hours and of a volunteers scheme. As a manager, Ken will be remembered by those of us who worked for him as kind, generous and inspiring, with a distinctive, and occasionally disconcerting, sense of humour.

Ken enjoyed being at the hub of the intellectual life of the county. When he first came to Essex with Stephanie, they were determined to live in a typical local village. They were fortunate to be able to move into a delightful cottage in Great Sampford. Many of us have fond memories of being entertained by them there. Ken entered into the life of the community, and this involvement continued after his retirement. He became a churchwarden of Little Sampford; and it was fitting that his funeral was held there.

Richard Harris,  
formerly Archive Services Manager,  
Essex Record Office

### ***Essex Place-Names; Places, Streets and People*** by James Kemble

**T**he names of many of our villages, streams, inns, fields and woods were given or were acquired in the past probably for some good reason. The great majority of river, stream, parish and villages names are many hundreds of years old, some dating from Anglo-Saxon and earlier times. Great and Little Baddow take their name from the Celtic name for the river Chelmer, the *Baedwan*, of which there is documentary evidence in the tenth century, and Rayleigh, recorded as *Ragheleia* in Domesday Book is translated as 'the wood in the clearing of the wild she-goats or roe-deer'.

The collection of names of fields used by farmers and recorded for tax purposes in the Tithe Awards in the middle of the nineteenth century, by land owners wishing to portray the extent of their lands and in land transactions recording sales, rentals and inheritance, allows a study of how names have evolved over centuries. The modern bridge name in Beauchamp Roding, Shallow Bridge, was *Scheleford* in the thirteenth century; the meaning is not 'shallow ford' but rather from Old English *sceolh*, winding, a description of the River Roding here. The same root is found in Shellow Bowells.

Volunteer Recorders have been collecting Essex field- and place-names from historic documents and old maps. These are added to the Essex Place-names database which is freely available to researchers on the web site: [www.essex.ac.uk/history/esah/essexplacenames](http://www.essex.ac.uk/history/esah/essexplacenames).

This research has led to the likely siting of a hitherto unlocated Saxon chieftain's burgh or fortified

encampment at Mashbury (which means Maecca's Fort) at a group of fields now called Oldberry, the old burh. Perhaps the burh at Tollesbury will also be located in a similar way. Under Old Church field in Ashdon may be the remains of the Danish King Cnut's minster founded after the epic battle against the English in 1020.

The recently published book *Essex Place-Names; Places, Streets and People* is an introduction into this fascinating subject with particular emphasis on this county but also with a wider overview of the development and evolution of names over centuries throughout this island. Countryside Books has given four copies to the *Essex Journal* to celebrate publication. You can win a copy by answering the following question:

#### **In which parish was located the ford on the winding river?**

Please send your answer to reach the editor by no later than 24th December:  
EJ Place-Names Competition, 30 Main Road,  
Broomfield, Chelmsford CM1 7EF  
or email: [neilwiffen@hotmail.com](mailto:neilwiffen@hotmail.com).

The first four correct entries will receive a copy of *Essex Place-Names; Places, Streets and People*.

James Kemble

**Review of Essex Place-Names;  
Places, Streets and People,**  
Historical Publications Ltd, 2007,  
160pp, £14-95, ISBN 978-1-905286-21-8.

Place-names express an attribute of their place of origin. These attributes follow some general formations. Names may relate to habitation; thus Wix is simply derived from the Saxon *wic*, or dairy farm, the local type of habitation, and maybe records a notably productive farming area. The people who lived in the *feld*, or open country around Finchingfield, were *Finc's* people. The derivation frequently relates to animals, maybe those residing locally and probably in uncommonly large numbers; Rettendon is derived from *raett dun*, a rat-infested hill; Borley from *bar leah*, a boar wood or clearing. Vegetation is represented in Birchanger, *bierce hangar*, birch-covered hanging or sloping ground; *golde hangra*, for a marigold covered slope at Goldhanger; Oakley, from *ac leah*, oak-tree wood. All these

### **Essex Place-Names** *Places, Streets and People*



James Kemble

examples are drawn from *Essex Place-Names* by James Kemble.

A locality becomes associated with a word or expression that once described and now defines the place. *Finc's* people have long gone, the boar has been extinct in England for over 300 years, until recent reintroduction that is, and the marigolds are doubtless less prominent than in earlier times, but the labels still persist. Place-names acquire their longevity easily. There is an inbuilt disinclination to change the name of a place, when to do so would remove it from maps and render the place itself anonymous albeit temporarily. In England, their persistence must also be aided both by a national adherence to tradition and to a rich history. The study of place-name is an integral aspect of local historical research as well as being an absorbing fascination.

The source, meaning and classification of Essex place-names are the subjects of this book. At its core, the book contains a gazetteer of parish, manor and river names, as quoted above. This is supplemented by a similar list of street, road and local names. These lists do not attempt to be exhaustive but the main themes are illustrated. Preceding these lists, several essays provide background and comment on the main sources and influences on names; influences from the Saxon period; Norman names as recorded, for example, in Little Domesday Book, a source so informative for Essex and East Anglia; those names that refer back to French estates, such as Mountfitchet; estate charters and the Essex royal forests, both estates and forests sometimes being accompanied by descriptive and detailed perambulations of their boundaries; and lesser field and minor place-names. The book is completed by lists, which classify some of the place-names according to their origin, Celtic, Scandinavian and Pagan derivations, and those with natural sources from animals, trees and plants, for example.

So where does the book fit in the literature of place-names? *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names* is the authoritative work covering all names in a particular OS road atlas. It is England and it comes at a price. *The Place-Names of Essex* by Reaney is assiduous in listing in detail the changing representation of a wide selection of Essex names. The works of Margaret Gelling should also be mentioned in passing. However, these books are for the specialist and research purposes. The present volume is aimed at the general reader, and his pocket. The expectation is that he or she on reading will become enthused by the study of place-names, either in a particular locality or more widely in Essex. The essays in the book serve to introduce the issues on which a more advanced interest can be developed. The author has taken an independent approach so there are some discrepancies in interpretation with the Cambridge dictionary, indicating a continuing lively dialogue in the subject. Freely illustrated with Essex photographs and prints the book is a useful contribution to Essex lore.

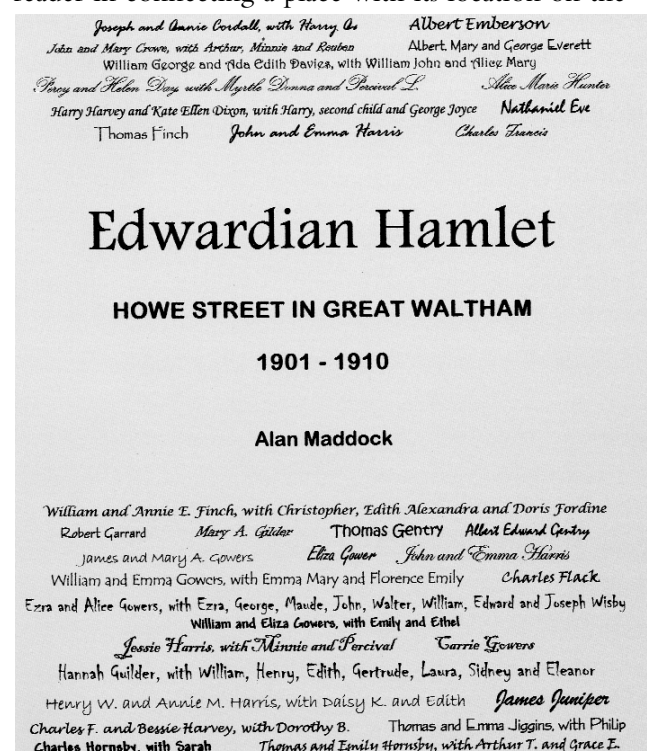
Robert Brooks

**Alan Maddock, *Edwardian Hamlet: Howe Street in Great Waltham, 1901-1910*. Woodmans Cottage, 2008, 124pp, £10, ISBN 978-0-954764-41-8.**

Alan Maddock's latest book on Howe Street, a hamlet in the parish of Great Waltham, is a study of the locality during the monarchy of Edward VII and is a follow-up to his earlier publication, *Victorian Hamlet: Howe Street in Great Waltham, 1837-1901*. He clearly has a great fondness for the area, which is apparent throughout this book.

In Chapter 10, *Perspectives*, in a review of his research and the range of material used in the text, he considers that the detail is 'very patchy'. He is being tough on himself. He might have produced a longer book, or he could yet create a further follow-up on the 1901-10 decade, with supplementary material on the issues he raises in *Perspectives*, but in the meantime this publication is crammed with facts and will provide informative reading for local and family historians researching the Great Waltham area as well as the wider readership. The author's frustration is understandable, but often the detail required for a fuller explanation and analysis of the life of a small community simply does not exist – or it turns up a few weeks after publication!

The author lists his sources in the introduction. Amongst the many used, the 1910 Inland Revenue Valuation Office surveys were a rich source of information. He then explains the structure of the book in a helpful orientation for the reader. The next two chapters are dictionaries: the first, entitled *Places*, lists the hamlet's properties and their occupants and owners. Here there is sometimes a tussle for the reader in connecting a place with its location on the



appropriate 1910 map, but patience is rewarded.

The chapter on *People* lists family surnames, which are followed by notes on members of that family and the land they occupied, plus further detail culled from a number of sources. Sometimes these notes are so brief that they whet the appetite for further information about interesting people like Frances Joslyn, school mistress at Great Waltham school for 44 years (having started there at 18), and the Jasper farming family that hailed from Cornwall. Equally, the reader's curiosity is raised by more detailed entries, such as those about Great Waltham families like the Milbanks and Gowers, not to mention county personalities like William Nevill Tufnell.

Much of this curiosity is satisfied in Part 2 of the book, entitled *Narrative*, which examines events and institutions in the district. It includes a miscellany of local facts, supported by relevant *Scrapbooks* of newspaper cuttings and photographs, which extend and develop our knowledge of these people. In this way the influence of W.N. Tufnell is made apparent; as squire he owned Langleys Park, which he regularly made available as the venue for local events, and was a powerful head of the village as landowner, decision-maker and benefactor. His unmarried sisters were regular contributors of good works in Howe Street.

The Milbanks were also seen to be influential – as property owners, businessmen, church officials and starring members of the Great Waltham cricket team. At the other end of the social scale, Edward Johnson had more than one brush with the law. Another interesting character appearing in the section on *Law and Order* is Rev W.F. Clulow of the Howe Street Primitive Methodist chapel, who clearly had a mind of his own. Individuals like these become well-known to historians researching a small locality; indeed, the members of such a cast of characters become old friends because of the regularity of their appearances in local affairs and, in consequence, there is a constant curiosity to know what becomes of them.

The fascination of Alan Maddock's study lies in the emerging picture of life in a small agricultural community at the start of the twentieth century. He is unable to discover all that he would like to know about the hamlet and deliberately poses a number of unanswered questions. Towards the end of the book he adds an appendix in which he is able to provide supplementary findings about Howe Street as a Victorian Hamlet, his previous publication. In the same way, we look forward to hearing more about life in the Edwardian Hamlet as his thorough researches of Howe Street take him further into the century.

Noel Beer

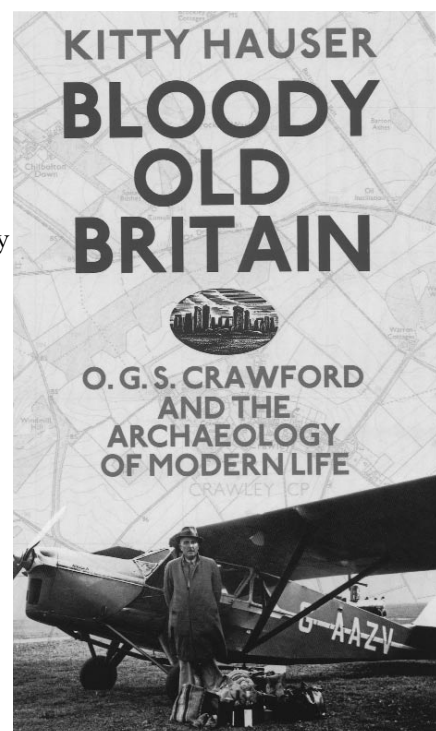
**Kitty Hauser, *Bloody Old Britain: O.G.S. Crawford and the Archaeology of Modern Life*, Granta Books, 2008, xvi, 286pp, £16-99, ISBN 978-1-862078-73-4.**

O.G.S. Crawford is known to many as the pioneer of archaeological interpretation of aerial photographs.

A search for biographical material in the basement of the Oxford Institute of Archaeology led to 49 boxes of photographs of obscure subjects (such as graffiti, signs and billboards), as well as papers in the Bodleian Library containing an elegantly worded warning to future biographers! We should be grateful that Dr Hauser accepted the challenge and has produced an excellent account of this prickly, eccentric and secretive individual. She traces the early influences (both in archaeology and international socialism) which led to the development of his considerable skills in interpreting aerial photographs in the First World War.

Then, after working as a field archaeologist in Wales and the Sudan, he secured a post as the Ordnance Survey's first archaeological officer. In the face of disapproval from his seniors, much time was spent away from the office investigating archaeological sites, travelling on a bicycle adapted to carry rolls of maps. Though he himself was rarely able to fly, he had contacts who took aerial films of the same areas repeatedly, under different conditions of light, season and crop. He became adept at detecting the faintest traces of archaeological remains in the landscape and amassed a vast archive of material, most of which was lost (to his immense distress) in the bombing of Southampton in November 1940. He then started a new career as a photographer for the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, recording bomb damage in Southampton; a very suitable job for the trained eye of a field archaeologist, as the explosions had peeled away the overlying strata, revealing a mediaeval cellar or a Tudor timber frame under the modern skin.

Dr Hauser reveals Crawford's other driving interest, a conviction that national boundaries would vanish with the imminent formation of socialist world government. He was strongly anti-religion and anti-establishment, and saw his detailed photographs of the minutiae of daily life as an archaeological record of a society that would shortly be replaced by a better, fairer and more decent one. The ideas of intellectuals, such as the writer H.G. Wells, who embraced similar ideas of international socialism in the 1930s, strongly influenced him. By 1943 he had completed a book entitled *Bloody Old Britain* from which the name of Dr Hauser's biography is derived. Principally it was a rant against a society of which he strongly disapproved and, not surprisingly, it was never published, even under the bowdlerised title of *Bunk of Britain*. It was too angry and too unpatriotic for a country at war.



This is a beautifully written biography which supplies the necessary background to understand the context in which Crawford's ideas and skills developed. The only disappointment is the rather poor quality of the reproductions of Crawford's photographs. Nevertheless, it is highly recommended.

Michael Leach

**Michael Haag, *The Templars – History & Myth*, Profile Books, 2008, 368pp, £15, ISBN 978-1-846681-48-6.**

The order of Knights Templar can be studied from two perspectives. Its known history is encompassed in quite a short time span. Founded in 1119, it rapidly rose to a position of great international power and influence, before being brutally suppressed at the instigation of the King of France in 1312, on the basis of spectacular allegations, the truth of which will probably never be known. There are two strands to the story, the military one, which is tied up with the wider story of the crusades, and the economic one, concerned with its financial operations and power in Western Europe. Because comparatively little archival evidence has survived, the history of the order presents considerable opportunity for conjecture and speculation.

Then there is the 'myth', the mountain of misinformation, fiction, wishful thinking and conspiracy theory that has arisen over the last two centuries or so surrounding the order, its origins and supposed survival. This gives writers three opportunities. They can go along with the myth-making and add to it; they can attempt to disprove the more bizarre elements rationally; or they can treat the myth, and the people who created and espoused it, as a subject for historical (and literary) study in its own right.

As the title of the book indicates, Michael Haag has here combined a study of the history of the order with a detailed examination of the myth, in which he takes a decidedly sceptical stand. As if to make his task even harder, he adds to these a summary of the history, as far as it is known, of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. (The Templar's headquarters were on its site – hence their name.) This is followed by a summary of the later history of Jerusalem and of the rise of Islam. The history of the order itself from its foundation in 1119 is incorporated in a wider study of the crusades as a whole. Effectively therefore the period covered by the book is from before 1200 BC to 2007 AD.

The pivotal section of the book discusses the suppression of the order in 1312, and the contrast between the fate of the order and its assets in France and what happened elsewhere. The author takes a balanced view of the charges against it, neither spending too much time fruitlessly speculating on the stranger accusations, nor dismissing them all as malicious fabrications. He does have the advantage of being perhaps the first popular historian in English to be able to refer to the revelations of the *Chinon*

*Parchment*, discovered in the Papal archives in 2001, which establishes that Pope Clement V considered the Templars to be innocent of the more extreme charges.

The book also contains a substantial guide to surviving Templar sites and buildings in Britain, Europe and the Middle East. The only significant Essex content in the book is the description of Cressing Temple in this section. This will probably not tell most readers of the *Journal* more than they already know.

The book ends with a consideration of the Templars in fiction and popular culture, covering opera, novels, films, rock music and video games. Although there are no individual references in the text, the book contains an extensive list of *further reading*. There is also, as a sign of the times, a list of

web-sites, although, as might be expected, more of these are relevant to the myth than to the history.

The style, both literary and visual, of the book invites comment. Despite the need to cover a lot of ground, repetition is used as a deliberate constructional technique to hold the reader's attention. This, combined with the distinctive use of typography and illustrations, makes it seem very like a television documentary series transferred to paper. The book is an easy read in the most literal sense, but this should not mask the fact that, as far as this reviewer can tell, it has at its core an accurate, if fairly brief, account of the known history of the Templar order, and an interesting study of the many ramifications of the myth. Essex readers must be advised however that what they will not find here is a detailed account of the agricultural and administrative operation of the order's estates that would put the Cressing Temple barns into an economic and social context.

Richard Harris

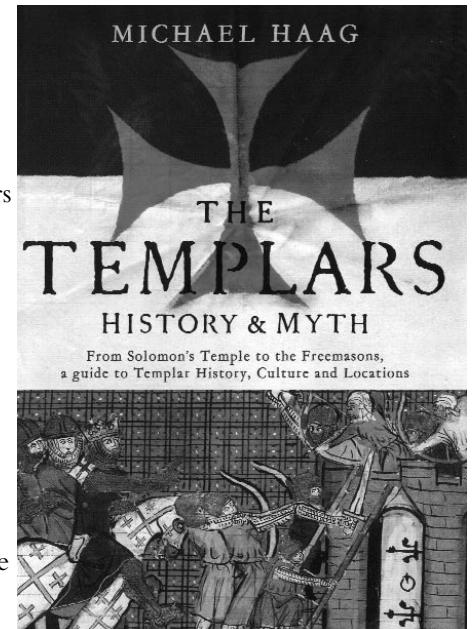
## Your Book Reviewers are:

**Noel Beer** has written many booklets on various aspects of nineteenth century Rayleigh history following retirement.

**Robert Brooks** is a retired scientist. He is founder of the High Country History Group.

**Richard Harris** has recently retired as Archive Services Manager of the Essex Record Office.

**Michael Leach** is a retired GP who is currently the Honorary Secretary of the Essex Society for Archaeology and History.



# EJ 20 Questions? Nancy Briggs

Nancy Briggs, MA, FSA, of Lancashire descent, was born in Winchester in 1929, while her father was stationed on Salisbury Plain. She was educated in Surrey and at St. Anne's College, Oxford, where she read history and developed an interest in monumental brasses. Trained as an archivist at the Bodleian Library, she came to Essex in 1953 to work at the Essex Record Office until 1987, latterly as Supervisor of the Search Room. In 1978 she married A.C. (Gus) Edwards.

**1. What is your favourite historical period?** Georgian.

**2. Tell us what Essex means to you?** A place, which deserves to be better known, where I have spent more of my life than anywhere else.

**3. What historical mystery would you most like to know?** The Princes in the Tower.

**4. My favourite history book is...** Geoffrey Baskerville, *English monks and the Dissolution of the Monasteries*, still as eye-opening as when I first read it.

**5. What is your favourite place in Essex?** Colchester.

**6. How do you relax?** I confess to an addiction to the works of Colin Dexter and P.D. James.

**7. What are you researching at the moment?** Essex country houses and gardens.

**8. My earliest memory is...** I would like to think that I saw Lawrence of Arabia on his motorcycle above Bovington Camp, but I am sure that, later in the summer of 1935, I stood in the streets of Battersea, with my schoolfellows, watching an incredibly old couple drive slowly past in their Rolls – my first glimpse of royalty!

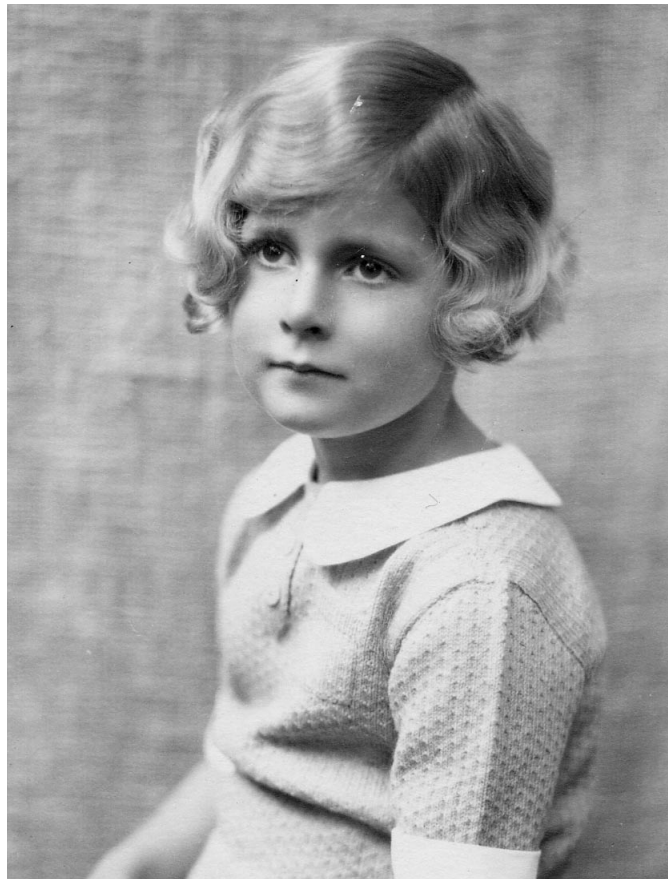
**9. What is your favourite song/piece of music and why?** I am not musical, but 'I vow to thee, my country...' brings back wartime memories. I last heard it sung at my father's memorial service.

**'...watching an incredibly old couple drive slowly past in their Rolls...'**

**10. If you could travel back in time which event would you change?** The deposition of Richard II; would the fifteenth century English cultural achievement have been even greater or would England have descended into chaos?

**11. Which four people from the past would you invite to dinner?** Dorothy Wadham, the redoubtable founder of Wadham College, Oxford; Peter Collinson for the light he could throw on eighteenth century horticulture; the architect, John Johnson; Sir Henry Bate Dudley.

**12. What is your favourite food?** Asparagus.



(Photograph courtesy of Nancy Briggs)

**13. The history book I am currently reading is...** Shani D'Cruze, *A Pleasing Prospect...eighteenth-century Colchester*.

**14. What is your favourite quote from history?** Elizabeth I at Tilbury: 'I know that I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England, too.'

**15. Favourite historical film?** *Orlando*.

**16. What is your favourite building in Essex?** Bradwell Lodge.

**17. What past event would you like to have seen?** The landing of Charles II at Dover in 1660, if only to see the expressions on the faces of the bystanders as the king kissed the Bible.

**18. How would you like to be remembered?** As one who tried to use their knowledge and skills to help others carry out historical research at all levels.

**19. Who inspires you to read or write or research history?** At the risk of being repetitive,\* it must be Gus Edwards. For architectural history, Sir Howard Colvin, most generous, and meticulous, of scholars.

**20. Most memorable historical date?** My mother, having spent her childhood in New Orleans, had an American version of the 1492 rhyme,\* but for me it must be 1837 – the accession of Victoria, the end of the Georgian age and the death of John Constable, who personifies so much of Essex at that period.

\*See Lord Petre's responses *Essex Journal*, Spring 2008.



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