Essex JOURNAL
A REVIEW OF LOCAL HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY
Autumn 2011

Samuel Courtauld's Paternalism In The Halstead Silk Mill

Plus

J.C. Thresh

And

The Essex Blitz

Also

Remembering John Appleby

And

Book Reviews

EJ 20 Questions: Maureen Scollan

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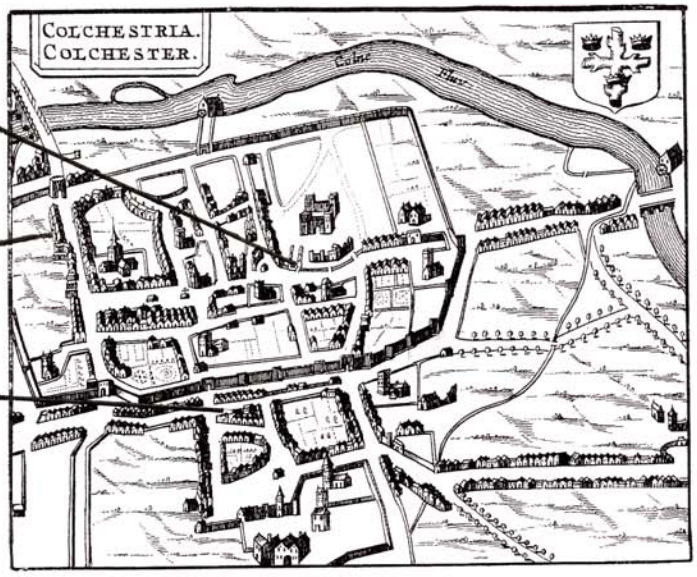

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Main cover illustration:
Extract from 1st Ed 25" Ordnance Survey map, sheet 17-9.
(Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office.)

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EJ Editorial

Oh well, that's almost another year past. I'm not quite sure where it has gone but it has. Now the clocks have gone back and it is dark by 4:30 it is hard to remember the wonderful spring we had, although the lovely weather in late September and early October was a real tonic. But what a year it has been what with the Arab Spring, war in Libya, phone hacking and the continuing and frightening economic situation in Europe. Sometimes I hardly dare listen (or is the feeling one of excited trepidation?) to the *Today Programme* in the morning for fear of what is going to be reported! When the history books come to be written of these times it will take a nimble mind to make sense of it all.

Talking of historians, in my last editorial I discussed the idea of having historians to help guide government policy. We could bring our level headed and analytical research skills to the politicians to help influence responsible and longer term policies which would be developed using evidence of what had happened in the past. It probably wouldn't help with party ideologies but it might make for a slightly saner world. Over the summer in a *Guardian* editorial entitled 'Unthinkable? Ministers to take historical advice', much the same thing was suggested:

> 'Britain suffers from a political deficit...The Westminster classes have a serious lack of historical knowledge...Politics is now a young person's profession: its players no longer come with historical knowledge. Which means that it needs to be formally implanted in Whitehall. The government has economists and scientists: why not appoint a chief historical adviser?'

I wouldn't want to claim any responsibility for the idea, nor am I considering applying for the position, but it is gratifying that it is an idea that is being discussed, and this can only be a good thing. Let us continue to be ever vigilant and make sure that the fruits of our historical researches are made known to all.

In this issue we have another update on the progress of the Victoria County History of Essex are making. They are currently celebrating their Diamond Jubilee and I was able to attend their party held at the Essex Record Office back in October where it was lovely to meet up with so many friends. The talks were very interesting and Jane Pearson and Maria Rayner have adapted their presentation on the Lock Hospital in Colchester for the next issue – something to look forward to.

Hornbeams are probably my favourite tree and are very much a tree of our Essex woodlands. For several years I have been talking with Richard Morris about them and how pollarding is being re-introduced to Epping Forest. Here he updates us all on this progress.

Peter Wynn has written an authoritative article on J.C. Thresh. Many of us will have touched upon his work in the volumes of the *Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health* which he was involved with. However, Peter's article demonstrates the influential role that Thresh has played both nationally and internationally. Thinking back to historians advising politicians, Peter has reminded me that the role of County Councils in respect of public health, including the requirement for a Medical Officer of Health, was reduced in 1974. However, it seems that there will now be some reversion towards the former position with the Health and Social Care Bill, now before Parliament. This will require local authorities to appoint a Director of Public Health who will be required to produce annual reports for their area. So here here we go again then – nothing new under the sun!

I'm sure that many of you are familiar with the role of the Courtauld family in the history of the silk industry in Essex. Margarita Stylianou has taken a novel angle on the story and has written an interesting article on the predominantly female workforce. In our age of equal rights it is hard to imagine that once women were treated very much as second class workers.

It is also hard to believe that within living memory bombs were being dropped on Essex. My own parents remember the war vividly and I have grown up with their memories but it is still chastening to read Paul Rusiecki's article on the Essex Blitz. How would we cope with seeing whole streets destroyed and family and friends killed or wounded? I hope that I would measure up as that generation did.

Those events of 70 or so years ago are fading from living memory and in this issue we mark the passing of John Appleby who answered the call, as so many did, and fought for his country. I only had the privilege of meeting John on a few occasions and did not know much about his life. His obituary, by Stan Newens makes poignant reading. One of the books I have 'on the go' at the moment is *Akenfield* by Ronald Blythe. In it one of the characters, Sammy Whitelaw, says:

> 'The old people have gone and have taken a lot of truth out of the world with them.'

There is a lot less truth in the world now that John Appleby has died. As historians, we must remember.

Neil

Notes from the Board

From the Hon. Membership Secretary:

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A. Individuals:

Subscriptions are due by 1st January 2012, and renewal forms are enclosed for those paying annually. Please consider setting up a standing order, which saves you and us time and money. If you do so, please complete and return the Banker's Order form to me (not to your bank) as soon as possible.

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2. Email addresses

I would appreciate email addresses from as many subscribers as possible, whether individuals or organisations. In particular I should be glad to have addresses for subscriptions taken out before 2010, when the new application form, with space for email addresses, was introduced.

Please be assured that any information you provide to the *Essex Journal*, including your email address, will be for internal use only, for example to deal with queries (and if necessary to remind tardy payers!) and would not be disclosed to anyone else without your permission.

If you are willing to do so please email me your address (individuals) or that of your contact person (organisations), and in both cases please include your name and the first line of your postal address.

Many thanks,

Jenepher Hawkins,
Hon. Membership Secretary.
email: jenepherhawkins@phonecoop.coop

From the Hon. Secretary:

History meets the 21st Century!

The *Essex Journal* is pleased to announce it has made a tentative foray into joining the digital age. We now have a page on Facebook, so you can become our friend and get updates on the progress of the next edition and any other exciting news. We are also now on Twitter, so you can follow us and get regular updates.

We also now have a *Journal* email address you can contact us on, and plans for a dedicated website in the future, which will enable us to develop further the ways we can provide information and articles to you over time.

These are all in very early stages at the moment, so if you have ideas of what you would like to see or things that would be good, please let us know.

You can find us at the following addresses:

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Looking forward to hearing from you!

Many thanks,

Karen Lawrence
Hon. Secretary
email: karenlawrence@waitrose.com

Victoria County History of Essex

Diamond Jubilee

On Saturday 8th October, 2011, VCH Essex celebrated its anniversary with a well-attended seminar at the Essex Record Office.

Amongst many of its friends and supporters, it not only commemorated its re-founding in 1951 but also marked three other important events. Firstly, the publication of Volume XI; secondly, the move to control of VCH Essex by the VCH Essex Appeal Fund following the loss of Essex County Council funding and, in consequence, the launch that day of an appeal for funding to carry forward the work on Volume XII and beyond.

In regard to Volume XI, it had been expected to be delivered on the day but unexpected problems with the index forestalled that pleasure. The volume is now expected to be available at the end of the year; so still a Jubilee event, just.

The loss of County Council funding, leaving only our free accommodation at the Record Office, led directly to the Appeal Fund re-assuming control of VCH Essex as it had done for most of its history. The launch of our fund-raising campaign to carry us forward has already been a first notable success for the Appeal Fund. Even before the launch, once it was known that we were without County Council funding, around half the required £50,000 had already been donated by friends anxious to help preserve this irreplaceable historical project. Further donations were received on the day and the Appeal Fund is now confident that the future of the VCH Essex will be secured for the next three to four years.

In terms of its objectives, with the exception of the delayed publication of Volume XI, the Diamond Jubilee celebratory day was a great success, aided notably by a series of fascinating papers.

The morning was given over to themes (and outtakes!) from Volume XI by Chris Thornton, Herbert Eiden and James Bettley. The afternoon commenced with the circumstances of and the need for the appeal by Sir Alex Jarratt, Vice-Chairman of the Appeal Fund and Chairman of the appeal itself. Three further stimulating papers concluded the day: by Professor James Raven on the Harsnett Collection (now at Essex University), by Jane Pearson and Marie Rayner on the Colchester Lock Hospital and by Brenda Watkin on the Discovering Coggeshall Project.

The VCH Essex Appeal Fund is grateful to Essex County Council for free use of the Record Office, to the Essex history groups who exhibited and, in particular, to the staff of the Record Office and members of the Friends of Historic Essex who underpinned what, these days, we call the logistics of the event.

Geoffrey Hare
Chairman, VCH Essex Appeal Fund

We still have many thousands of pounds to raise so, to support the VCH Essex, donations should be sent by cheque payable to **The VCH Essex Appeal Fund** addressed to:

H. Martin Stuchfield, J.P., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.
Hon. Treasurer, VCH Essex Appeal Fund
Lowe Hill House
Stratford St. Mary
Suffolk CO7 6JX

Lord Petre cutting the VCH Diamond Jubilee cake watched by officers and members of the Appeal Fund committee (from left to right)
Geoffrey Hare, Alex Jarratt, Patricia Herrmann, Chris Manning-Press and Sarah Manning-Press.

Wood-Pasture and Pollarding in Epping Forest

For 800 years Epping Forest was a 'working' forest with farmers and villagers exercising their common rights to graze cattle over the length and breadth of the forest. The villagers since at least Tudor times exercised a right to lop trees during the winter months, and to use the wood for fencing, house building, firewood and the smaller branches as feed for their animals.

The method used in lopping trees was known as pollarding. This involved cutting branches above 10 feet from the base of the tree, which left new growth to develop without the risk of being eaten by grazing deer or cattle. The cycle of pollarding was repeated every 10 to 15 years, with the result that these trees never grew into 'high forest'. The resulting landscape has come to be known as 'wood-pasture'.

Although much has been written about the land-use of forests, woodland history is a much-disputed subject, and there are differing views on how much of Epping Forest was managed as wood-pasture with pollarding a widespread practice. However, we know that the practice of lopping was common in areas of forest adjacent to villages, such as Loughton.

By the end of the nineteenth century the villagers need to lop trees was much reduced. Coal was by then transported by canal and on railways, and brick was the most common material for building houses. Following the Epping Forest Act of 1878, which appointed the City of London Corporation as Conservators of the forest, the practice of lopping and pollarding was debated with differing views being expressed. Alfred Russel Wallace, the distinguished naturalist, was against pollarding and described areas of pollards as a hideous assemblage of stunted mop-head like trees. However, Edward North Buxton, one of the Verderers, thought that pollards had an extreme quaintness and beauty in some of the knarled stems.

The Conservators took the decision to cease pollarding with the result that in the twentieth century areas of the forest that were previously pollarded became areas of high forest with the majestic oaks of Barn Hoppitt, and the Beech trees of Hill Wood and St Thomas's Quarters. Commoners' cattle continued to graze the forest with as many as 800 head of cattle on the forest each year in the early decades of the twentieth century. However, by the 1960s the number of farmers putting cattle on the forest had reduced substantially, and the BSE crisis of the1990s saw no cattle on the forest for six years. Pollarding had been reintroduced in a small area of Bury Wood at Chingford in the 1970s, and the ecologists began to take the view that this should be extended to a wider area as part of a policy to create wood-pasture which would improve the biodiversity of the forest.

This was allied in 2006 with a new grazing strategy with the objective of increasing the number of cattle on the forest, although one consequence of this was that areas of the forest would have to be fenced. Most recently, in 2009, the Conservators were successful in receiving a substantial grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, part of which is to fund the extension of wood-pasture, with an increase in the areas of new pollards and higher numbers of cattle, and the implementation of this project is now in progress.

The Conservators are also now preparing the next Management Plan for the forest for the period 2012 to 2022, and this will provide an opportunity to review the wood-pasture and grazing projects to assess their cost and sustainability in the long term.

Richard Morris
Verderer of Epping Forest

A Hornbeam, near Palmer's Bridge, pollarded in 2000, and the same tree ten years later. (R. Morris.)

The Significance of the Work of

John Clough Thresh (1850-1932)

by

Peter Wynn

John Clough Thresh (Plate 1) was born at Wakefield on 14th December 1850, the son of James and Jane (nee Clough).[1] James was a fitter and died whilst working on a railway in South America when John was three years old. In 1856 his mother married Joseph Ackroyd, an innkeeper from Eccleshill.

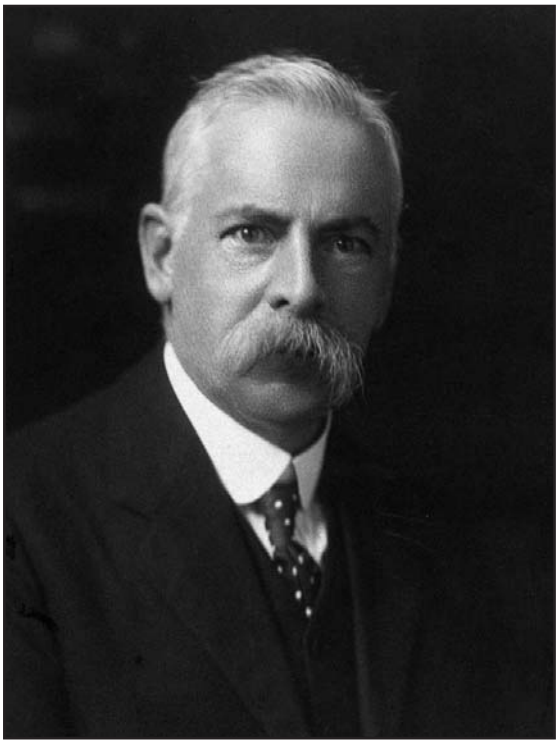


Plate 1.
Photographic portrait (unknown date) of John Clough Thresh by Elliott & Fry (Reproduced by courtesy of Wellcome Library, London, Photo No. V 27265)

After being educated privately Thresh was apprenticed to a chemist and druggist, qualifying at the age of 20[2] and became a Fellow of the Chemical Society of London (FCS) in 1875.[3] In 1872, living in Dukinfield in Cheshire, he married Maria England, an ironmonger's daughter from Pontefract[4] and subsequently established himself as a dispensing chemist in Buxton.[5] Whilst apparently continuing to run the business he studied at Owens College, Manchester where in 1880 he had obtained a University of London External BSc.[6] This was followed by a London DSc in 1882.[7] In 1884 he was appointed as Honorary General Secretary of the British Pharmaceutical Conference.[8] Having withdrawn from his partnership in running his business at Buxton,[9] Thresh returned to study at Manchester and graduated as MB and ChB in 1889. It has been speculated that his motive in seeking a medical qualification was a reaction to the evidence of a medical witness being given greater credence than his in a court case.[10]

On 3rd September 1889 a joint committee of the Chelmsford and Maldon Rural Sanitary Authorities appointed him as Medical Officer of Health to the two authorities for an initial period of three years at an annual salary of £600.[11] It was a requirement for holders of such appointments to be medically qualified so the post would have not been open to him until the completion of his further studies at Manchester.[12] In 1889 a minute of the Maldon authority records that the members have no objection to his taking up residence in Chelmsford or its immediate neighbourhood[13] and the 1891 census shows him living with his family at 'The Limes' in New London Road, Chelmsford.[14] Shortly afterwards he purchased 'Spergula' also in New London Road, later better known as Farleigh Hospice.[15] He lived here until his death. Although the name of the property is suggestive of his botanical interests, it was named by its previous owner.[16] On taking up his appointment in Essex, Thresh resigned as Honorary General Secretary of the British Pharmaceutical Conference and was appointed as a Vice-President of the Conference for the following year.[17] By 1892 Thresh was one of two Honorary Secretaries of the Society of Medical Officers of Health and in this capacity wrote to the *British Medical Journal* and *The Lancet* to solicit donations for a presentation to Sir George Buchanan, the retiring Medical Officer to the Local Government Board.[18] In 1892 Thresh obtained the Diploma of Public Health of the University of Cambridge and in 1896 was awarded the gold medal for his MD thesis at Manchester.[19]

His appointment to the two rural authorities was renewed at an unchanged salary in 1892.[20] After a period during which he compiled reports for Essex County Council summarising the reports of local Medical Officers of Health, Thresh was appointed Medical Officer of Health for Essex at an annual salary of £800 with effect from 29th September 1895.[21] Chelmsford and Maldon Rural District Councils agreed to make contributions towards this salary.[22] A scale of fees was also agreed by Essex County Council for chemical and bacteriological testing. Thresh also held an appointment as Lecturer in Public Health at The London Hospital and it is possible that this is where the tests were carried out at this time. However in 1909 he referred both to a laboratory at Chelmsford and the Public Health Laboratories at The London Hospital.[23] The initial appointment to Essex County Council was largely in connection with the authority's new responsibilities for isolation hospitals.[24] There was some resistance to the initial appointment.[25] However once the appointment had been made Thresh's work

increased as more duties were placed on the County Council by for example the Midwives Act, 1902, the Housing and Town Planning Act, 1909 and the National Insurance Act, 1911. In 1913 he resigned his positions with the Chelmsford and Maldon authorities and that of Lecturer at The London Hospital because of increasing commitments to the county council. The latter resignation resulted in the loss of his access to laboratory facilities at the hospital and the removal to 'rooms near Liverpool Street Station.'[26]

In October 1915 Thresh reminded the County Council that he would shortly be reaching the council's normal retirement age of 65. In view of the wartime conditions the Public Health and Housing Committee recommended that he be requested to continue his duties for a further year and that a special committee should be appointed to consider the duties of the County Medical Officer of Health and the organisation of the Public Health Department.[27] Thresh's appointment was further extended on occasions but eventually terminated on 31st March 1919 after he had tendered his resignation on health grounds.[28] He stated his willingness to act in an 'Advisatory [*sic*] capacity' and the Public Health and Housing Committee recommended that he be retained as Consulting County Medical Officer of Health for a year for a remuneration of £250.[29] On the recommendation of his successor the committee agreed to the recommend that annual contracts be awarded to Drs Thresh and Beale to undertake examination of specimens for sporadic cases of tuberculosis and river and effluent sampling.[30] It would appear that the Council may have wished to clip the wings of Thresh's successor. In accordance with the earlier recommendations of the Special Committee, his contract required him to devote his whole time to the duties of his office and not to engage in any occupation for profit nor to give professional evidence or take part in Parliamentary proceedings without committee approval. Any fees that he received for any purpose were to be paid into the County Fund.[31] It was also stated that one of his duties would be 'if and when the Essex County Council establish a chemical and bacteriological laboratory (as it is their intention to do) to supervise the same and be responsible for its efficiency.'

Thresh's final annual report included reference to his laboratory work, including that for other counties and had the following words 'The question whether the County Council could establish and staff a laboratory and do the work as well or as economically is an open one, and in my present position any opinion I might give could not be entirely without prejudice.'[32] It would appear that Essex County Council never established its own laboratory and the business of Thresh and Beale, later with Suckling as an additional partner, sometimes under the name of *The Counties Public Health Laboratories* continued to undertake work for Essex County Council until the Second World War.[33] In spite of a stroke in 1925, Thresh continued as a consultant to the County Council until four years before his death at home on 28th May 1932.[34] Although he lived outside of the Parish, he was buried in Widford churchyard, along with his wife who had died in October 1930.

The following strands can be identified in Thresh's work:

The extraction and description of active ingredients in plant materials

Chemical and biological analysis of water

Water Treatment

Investigation of outbreaks of disease

Conditions in urban and rural areas, including the provision of water and sewerage services

Utility of isolation hospitals

Disinfection

More general publishing

With the possible exception of the first, there is overlap between these, but each will be explored separately in subsequent sections of this article.

Extraction & Description of Active Ingredients of Plant Materials

This formed the main basis of his early work. In a series of papers[35] read at the British Pharmaceutical Conference in 1876 he described his work to isolate Capsaicin, the active component of chilli peppers. This work has been cited within the past decade in work on cancer and blood pressure treatment.[36] Between 1879 and 1882 he described similar work, grant aided by the Conference, on ginger,[37] from which he extracted gingerol, and hedychium.[38] Most commonly Thresh's work on gingerol has been cited in later work on foods and alternative therapies rather than mainstream medicine.[39]

Chemical and Biological Analysis of Water

Thresh took an interest in the mineral waters of Buxton. This work was described in papers to the Chemical Society.[40] In those papers he described his analysis of the mud deposited at the spring, the gases emitted at the spring as well as the dissolved gases within the water and the chemical composition of the water itself. He also described apparatus for collecting dissolved gases.[41] In 1890 he presented a paper to the Chemical Society on the measurement of dissolved oxygen in water[42] and in the same year one to the British Pharmaceutical Conference on the estimation of nitrite content of water.[43] His report on the water supply of Writtle[44] stated that he had examined samples of water from every known well in Writtle and Oxney Green. The careful analysis of water chemistry, seen earlier in his work at Buxton, is again apparent here.

In 1895 he described how, in the light of experience, his approach to water analysis had evolved since becoming a Medical Officer of Health.[45] He argued strongly that chemical analysis alone is insufficient as the basis for assessing whether water is safe to drink and advocated a holistic approach in which bacteriological analysis and knowledge of the source of the water is also considered. In the fairly recent past a commentator described this paper as 'a sober and far-reaching assessment of the state of water analysis [at the end of the 19th century]' and also acknowledged Thresh as the main British authority on water analysis in the early twentieth century.[46]

Thresh's textbook *Water and Water Supplies*, first published in 1896, with a second edition later in the same year and a third in 1901, set out basic properties of water, its sources, pollution, treatment, and distribution.[47] In was followed by *The Examination of Waters and Water Supplies* first published in 1904.[48] In the preface to the first edition Thresh reiterated the thrust of his 1895 paper. A review in the United States of the second edition described Thresh as 'one of the foremost water analysts in England' and the book as 'written by one who speaks with authority'.[49] It became a standard text and had seven editions. A subsequent publication by the Society for Water Treatment and Examination, 37 years after Thresh had died, described itself as 'A successor to *The Examination of Waters and Water Supplies* by Thresh, Beale and Suckling.'[50]

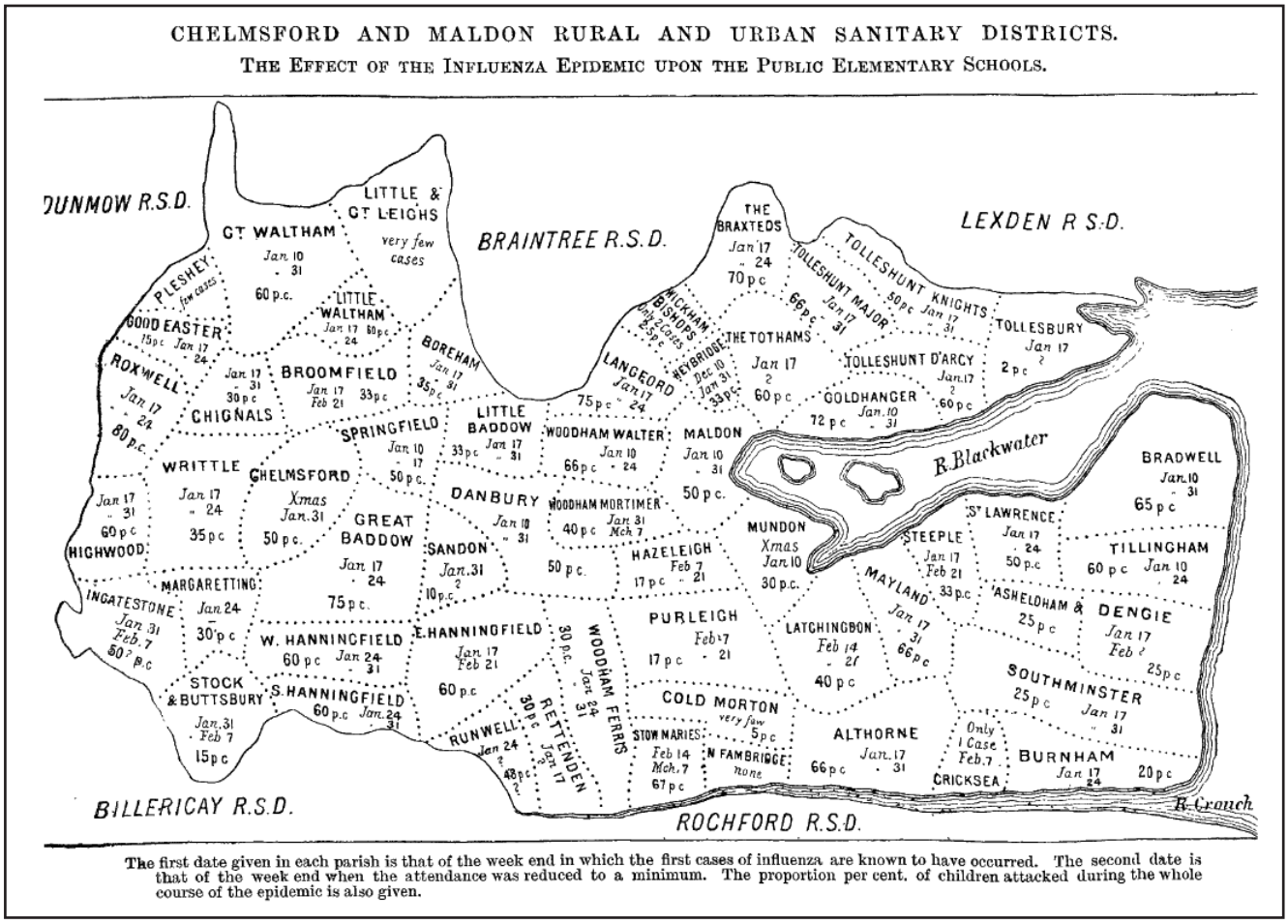
A smaller volume gave guidance on simple analysis of water for medical officers of health and others. This was first published in 1897 and had ten editions by 1931.[51] Essex was well represented in the examples used to illustrate the method and the interpretation of results. In a paper to the Association of Water Engineers Thresh again emphasised the need for a holistic approach when investigating sources of water pollution before describing approaches to tracing the flow of pollutants in groundwater using dye and other tracers.[52] The significance of this work has been noted by a current hydrogeology specialist who described Thresh as an authority on groundwater chemistry and pollution.[53] The second and subsequent editions of *The Examination of Waters and Water Supplies* included an example of the use of fluorescin to determine the source of pollution in a well at Great Baddow. In the early twentieth century the Geological Survey published a series of 'County Memoirs' on water resources. Thresh was involved in a number of those including that for Essex in 1916.[54] The publication of that volume was said by Thresh to have been delayed by the War Office because of its potential use to an invading enemy.[55]

Waste Water & Drinking Water Treatment

At the Seventh International Congress of Hygiene and Demography Thresh read a paper in which he outlined approaches to sewage treatment.[56] In this he described the advantages of separate systems of sewers for foulwater and rainwater and outlined a sequence of measures that could be applied in combination: today these are termed preliminary, primary, secondary and tertiary stages. In 1908 he reported on the use in the United States of calcium hypochlorite for the sterilisation of drinking water and his own experiments on its effectiveness.[57] In the following year he applied for a UK Patent for chlorination of water.[58] As the twentieth century progressed chlorination became accepted as a routine part of the treatment of drinking water supplies. In 1910 he noted the usefulness of slow sand filtration for purification of drinking water supplies and also the potential of ozone, chlorination and ultra-violet light for sterilisation before going on to describe his experiments into the latter technique.[59]

In 1913 Thresh stated that his annual report as Medical Officer of Health for Essex for 1910 had been in great demand for its analysis of comparative death rates in areas supplied with hard and soft water and presented further analysis that tended to show a lower death rate in hard water areas.[60] From 1989 water quality regulations have specified a minimum hardness for water.[61] On the other hand the maximum allowable concentrations of lead in drinking water have been reduced over time. Generally it is softer waters that have problems with high lead concentrations. However in 1905 Thresh drew attention to cases of lead poisoning in hard water areas.[62] In the 1920s he returned to the subject, investigating the production of soluble salts of lead under the action of various impurities within water including methods for measurement of the resulting concentrations of lead in the water.[63] Among the observations from this work was the potential role of silicates in preventing the solution of lead. As recently as 2010 this work was cited as a primary reference by a US manufacturer of silicate protection systems.[64]

Following his being consulted on the subject by civil and military authorities, in 1915 Thresh published a rebuttal to suggestions that zinc from galvanised pipework may be hazardous to health.[65] During the 1920s Thresh and Beale advised on new water treatment works for Chelmsford and Southend using non-ideal river water as the source. They proposed the use of a technique called the *excess lime process*, an effective but expensive alternative to chlorination suitable for heavily contaminated water, which enabled simultaneous softening and purification. Because of its novel approach, an experimental station was established at Langford, prior to construction of full scale plants for the two water undertakings.[66] The success of the approach was subsequently described in a paper to the Royal Institute of Chemistry.[67]



Map 1. Map included in the 1890 *Lancet* paper, 'The Influenza Epidemic and the Public Elementary Schools'. (Author's collection.)

Investigation of Outbreaks of Disease

At the beginning of the twentieth century deaths from diseases such as smallpox and typhoid fever were still occurring in Essex.[68] While, like his peers, Thresh was obliged to present regular reports to the councils who employed him, he sometimes went further: bringing matters to national attention. He was a frequent contributor to journals such as *The Lancet* and the *British Medical Journal* and produced a number of textbooks and more general publications on a variety of subjects. An early example of his thorough analysis concerned the pattern of an influenza epidemic outbreak in the Chelmsford and Maldon areas reported in 1890.[69] From a study of the date of first occurrence in each parish and the percentage of children affected he attempted to identify changes in virulence of the disease with time. (Map 1). In his reports to the authorities Thresh often noted the association of inadequate water supplies and proper sewerage provision with disease, for example the 1892 diphtheria outbreak in Heybridge.[70] Again this was no more than would be expected of a Medical Officer of Health at the time. However Thresh would go further ensuring national publicity for his investigations, for example he reported to the annual meeting of the British Medical Association on the occurrence of diphtheria within the county[71] He presented detailed statistical data but was unable to find explanations for differences in occurrence and mortality rates in different parts of the county. He suggested that a careful investigation of isolated cases was more likely to provide an explanation of the disease than investigation of epidemics.

Later his analysis of typhoid outbreaks at Halstead and Shoeburyness produced more definite conclusions. At Halstead, with careful analysis of the evidence, he eliminated milk and personal contacts as a source of initial infection but found damaged sewer pipes above a pipe supplying water from a local well.[72] At Shoeburyness he eliminated water supply and milk and defective drainage as causes but was able to discover that nearly all the people infected had eaten cockles from a source known to be polluted by sewage.[73] He noted that all those affected were newcomers to the area, older residents being aware of the risks associated with the beach from which the cockles were obtained. A further paper again traced an outbreak of typhoid and enteritis in 1902 to pollution of shellfish by sewage.[74] It is interesting that in 2009 the Health Protection Agency traced an outbreak of illness at a well known restaurant to Essex oysters polluted by sewage using approaches similar to those employed by Thresh.[75]

His study of the high incidence of smallpox at Purfleet[76], in which he was able to demonstrate the role of wind in the spread of the disease, has been described as recently as 2010 as a classic paper.[77] In 1903 there was an outbreak of diarrhoea in Chelmsford in which 14 people died. Thresh reported on how his investigation had led him to conclude that the source was a garden adjacent to a small storage reservoir on which road scrapings had recently been spread.[78] This report is not only referred to in his own subsequent books, but also in other's work.[79]

Conditions in Urban and Rural Areas

During his medical studies at Manchester he was a member of the committee of the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association. In this role he presented a paper to the association on conditions in the Ancoats area of Manchester.[80] He made a comparison between the districts having the highest and lowest death rates. Speaking at Owens College in 1890, Sir Spencer Wells, an eminent surgeon, invited members of Manchester Council to 'read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest' what Thresh had written.[81] One of his first actions in 1891, following the Housing of the Working Classes Act of the previous year, was to study the housing of the working classes within the two rural sanitary authority areas.[82] Like his earlier work at Ancoats, the report makes depressing reading. He drew attention to the limited provision of public water supplies and sewers, the widespread use of 'bumby' holes to receive household liquid and solid waste, the overflowing of privies into ditches, overcrowding, and poorly constructed and maintained cottages. He pointed out that in such conditions it was not possible to isolate infectious diseases nor properly treat any case of illness. In his opinion many families were pauperised on account of sickness produced by living under such unhealthy conditions. He noted with approval that the Maldon authority had adopted a series of bye-laws to be applied in the construction of new cottages and hoped that the Chelmsford authority would do likewise.

Also in 1891 he sought to investigate whether there was any connection between mortality rates and the quality of water supplies in the rural areas.[83] He presented tables of mortality for each parish with details of population and water sources but was unable to establish a definite relationship. Not surprisingly he stated that the use of rainwater stored in tubs or tanks or collected in ponds were open to the gravest objection, followed closely by water abstracted from brooks or streams although he admitted that the statistics were not strong. He concluded that the chief difficulty arose in connection with supplies to single cottages or small groups of cottages lying at a distance from the villages. In many instances where good water was not obtainable at reasonable cost, he questioned whether the dwellings could be considered fit for human habitation. He also reported his studies to the British Medical Association where he repeated the difficulty of establishing a definite statistical link between health and water quality.[84]

Reports by Thresh on unfit buildings soon became a regular feature of his reports to the Maldon authority.[85] However the 1890s were a time of agricultural depression and Thresh was concerned that the Local Government Boards model by-laws made provision of new cottages too expensive, particularly their insistence on the use of brick construction. His battle with the Local Government Board was described in a letter to *The Times*.[86] He gave evidence to this effect to a Parliamentary Select Committee in 1905,[87] following which more flexible model by-laws were introduced. His early work at Writtle[88] concluded that there was an urgent need for a public supply of pure water which, together with provision of sewerage, would allow the removal of privies that he considered were a constant source of nuisance and source of danger.

At the annual meeting of the British Medical Association in 1900 Thresh drew attention to the contrast between the sanitary provision of urban and rural areas.[89] He pointed to the unwillingness of landowners to sell small plots of land needed for such improvements, the obstructive attitudes of some influential members of local authorities and a system of tied cottages that discouraged improvement. A conference of the Sanitary Institute referred to the desirability of having reports on the water supply of each county.[90] Thresh's report for Essex[91] was stated to be an exemplar. It was followed a few years later by an updated account for the rural areas of the county only.[92] In 1919, having retired from the County Council, Thresh felt less constrained in producing a report for the Rural Housing and Sanitation Association on rural housing provision.[93] It examined factors such as overcrowding, sanitation, heating and household fittings and how conditions in the country could be improved by public building programmes. He used Widford as an example of overcrowding pointing out that within the parish's total area of 680 acres, there was a small area occupying less than 2 acres in which 34 of the parish's 76 families lived in small cottages (Map 2).

Isolation Hospitals

From 1875 local sanitary authorities had statutory powers to provide hospitals or temporary places for the reception of the sick.[94] Many, including the Maldon Union Rural Sanitary Authority, used temporary tents for use in epidemics.[95] In 1893 powers were given to county councils to direct inquiries to be made by the medical officer of health as to the need for such hospitals.[96] At this time Thresh showed his support for their provision with a letter to *The Lancet*.[97] Thresh's 1895 report to the Sanitary Committee of Essex County Council was

reprinted in *The Lancet*. In it he stated his opinion that isolation hospitals should not be temporary structures just for use in epidemics and that their real use should be for early isolation of odd cases of infectious disease.[98] In 1898 he stated his opinion that such provision was required for the urban and rural districts of Romford[99] and later that year considered whether Essex County Council should use its powers where the districts did not make provision themselves.[100]

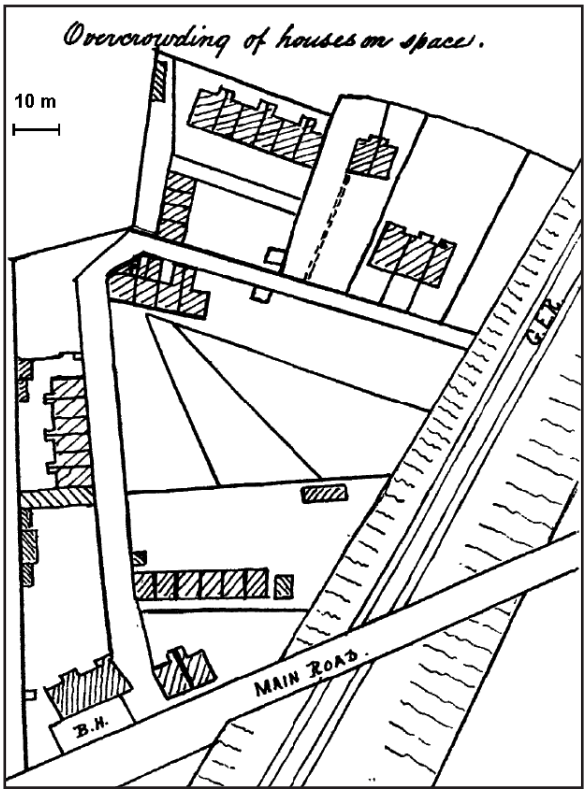
In a Lancet paper in 1902 Thresh considered the risks of smallpox spreading to surrounding areas from large isolation hospitals.[101] That drew on his investigation at Purfleet, reported above, where he identified wind-blown infection from hospital ships operated by the Metropolitan Asylums Board as the most likely source. His new paper presented an argument for smaller rather than large sites that he regarded as more likely to allow the spread of the disease. He also stated that the preferable solution lay in an effective vaccination programme. Although his annual report to Maldon Rural District Council for 1903 made reference to the new hospital built between Maldon and Tiptree, elsewhere in the report Thresh stated that the provision of cottages with three decent bedrooms would be more effective than isolation hospitals in controlling the spread of disease.[102] This is in effect a development of his approach described in the preceding paragraph.

Reporting to Essex County Council on hospital provision in 1904 he said that he could not see any statistics to prove that isolation hospitals are of any benefit in controlling infection but felt that common sense said they must have such a benefit.[103] In view of his previous concerns over the lack of provision of an isolation hospital at Romford, it is perhaps ironic that in 1906 *The Lancet* reprinted his report to the Romford Joint Hospital Board in which he outlined how the study of mortality statistics failed to demonstrate any reduction in the incidence of scarlet fever and diphtheria.[104] A similar view was expressed in his annual report for 1905 presented to Essex County Council where he again emphasised that reducing overcrowding in housing would reduce the need for isolation hospitals.[105]

Disinfection

Thresh demonstrated an interest in disinfection techniques when he attended the Pharmaceutical Conference, soon after his appointment to the Chelmsford and Maldon authorities, where, taking part in discussion on a paper made the following comment: 'When a medical officer of health had all the doors and windows of a cottage closed up, and burned sulphur, he satisfied the minds of the people that the place was disinfected ; but he did not always satisfy his own mind, and if some aerial disinfectant could be obtained which would kill all bacteria, and yet would not take the polish off the furniture, or affect the colour of the draperies, it would be a great boon to medical officers and to humanity at large.'[106]

In 1895 the Hospital Committee of Chelmsford Rural District Council recommended that permission be given to Dr Thresh 'to erect at his own expense at Baddow Road Isolation Hospital a disinfecting apparatus as an experiment.'[107] That was shortly after he had obtained a UK Patent for an 'Improved Disinfector' for treating bedding, clothing, etc.[108] Subsequent improvements to the apparatus were also patented by Thresh. Portable versions of the Thresh Disinfector were used in the field during the Boer and First World Wars.[109] Although the principal commercial manufacturer was the Thresh Disinfector Company, others also made the apparatus under licence (Plate 2 & Fig. 1). In 1902 Thresh jointly published a study into experiments in the effectiveness of disinfectant sprays, an approach then in common use.[110] He and his co-investigators discovered that there was no sterilising effect unless the sprays thoroughly wetted the surfaces.



Map 2.
Map from *Housing of the Agricultural Labourer* **showing overcrowding at Widford (approximate scale added). (Author's collection.)**

Other Publications

Thresh also published a number of books whose content was on the periphery of his main areas of interest.

His physics textbook published in 1880 is one which would be recognised today as an examination revision book, presenting an outline of the theory illustrated with past examination questions, some with solutions, others left for the students to solve.[111] In 1883 he wrote a guide for Buxton which drew on his analysis of the waters of the town but also contained basic tourist information.[112] Although not apparently within his main area of interest, he co-authored with the Assistant Medical Officer of Health for Leeds a book on additives in foods.[113] It differs from much of his other work in that it is generally summarising the work of others, although he was an

Plate 2. A Thresh Disinfector made under licence by Newton Chambers. (Reproduced by courtesy of Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust.)

expert witness in a few of the court cases summarised in the book. In 1920 the St John Ambulance Association published a short book by Thresh written round the association's hygiene syllabus.[114] A second edition was published in 1925.

Conclusion

It can be seen that Thresh's work had influence well beyond his adoptive county of Essex. Much of his professional work was considered as pioneering by his peers and also recognised as important by more recent researchers. An entrepreneurial side to his activities is also evident. On a small scale it would appear from the book plate on the current author's copy of Thresh's Tourist Guide to Buxton that he had left copies in hotels and/or guest houses, as a subtle form of advertising for his dispensing chemist business. On a larger scale we see the commercial development of the 'Thresh Disinfector' and patent protection of a system of water purification.

He also contributed to the community in which he lived. He was an active member of the Essex Field Club. In 1891 he spoke in favour of plans to merge the club with the then Essex and Chelmsford Museum, an arrangement that did not last.[115] It was said that he was largely instrumental in the provision of Widford Village Hall and vice-president of both Widford Football Club and the Chelmsford and District Football League.[116] He was pre-deceased by his son and left three daughters: Gertrude May, Dora Ackroyd and Florence alias Sister Hilda.[117] Gertrude May had some interests in common with her father: in 1902 she was involved in mineral analysis at the County Technical Laboratory in Chelmsford and was active in the Essex Field Club, publishing through it work on Essex geology and water.[118]

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23. JCT, *Summary of the Reports of the District Medical Officers of Health in the Administrative County of Essex for the Year 1909*, (Chelmsford 1910), p71. In this under the heading 'The County Public Health Laboratories' he states 'The laboratory at Chelmsford was equipped by the County Medical Officer and approved by the County Sanitary Authority'. This would appear to be provided at his own expense as no County Council minute has been located to authorise the provision at the Council's expense. Thresh went on to say 'Some of the districts near London find London more convenient …and send [specimens] to the London Hospital and the examinations there are made by Dr Beale, who is Demonstrator in the Public Health Laboratories under my charge. I attend on Mondays and Thursdays and see far more officials and have far more County appointments there than at Chelmsford.'
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Samuel Courtauld's Paternalism in the Halstead Silk Mill

by

Margarita Stylianou

This article[1] discusses Samuel Courtauld's (1793-1881) paternalism in relation to his silk mill in Halstead between the years 1825-1881. The main aim of this research is to explore the degree to which it was gendered and aimed specifically at shaping the behaviour of the female factory workers who comprised the majority of the workforce (Plate 1). Was Samuel Courtauld motivated simply by a desire to secure the respectability of his female workforce or did economic considerations also play a role in his family's paternalism? Did the Courtauld family's paternalism affect the locality in a positive way and contribute to the social amelioration of his workforce and the locals, as newspapers of the period suggest? And how were the efforts of Courtauld's paternalism regarded by the workforce in general and the female workers in particular? Did they welcome the opportunities offered or were they resentful of his attempts to interfere in their lives?

Due the lack of primary sources as far as the workers themselves are concerned, this article is mostly based on the accounts of the Courtauld family or those of other respectable members of society, such as Miss Mary Merryweather, the teacher of the female workers in the Factory School. Contemporary press reports provide us with valuable insight but most of these were sympathetic towards the Courtauld family and is still a second-hand account of the workforce. The factory records are a valuable source because they demonstrate the rate of control that was imposed on the workforce. It is nonetheless possible to gain some idea of how the workers reacted to Courtauld's paternalism by reading the available sources thoroughly, and also by analysing certain key moments of interaction between the workers and the Courtaulds.

The new factory system in nineteenth-century Britain pioneered the gathering of a large number of people under one roof, and under the authority of one person, the manufacturer. The co-existence of male and female workers of different ages in the factories was something new, which challenged the prevalent social structure which supported the segregation of the public and domestic sphere and therefore, the separation of males and females. Paternalism was a contemporary social trend which proposed an answer to such problems; however, it was a policy which lacked a homogeneous form and therefore it was very flexible.[2] Paternalism shared one feature in all its manifestations: dependence characterised the relationship between the benefactor and the 'worthy' poor.[3] The government and several manufacturers thus became the main agents of paternalism; on the one hand, the government passed various Acts controlling child and female labour and rendered them legally protected persons, while, on the other hand, upper and middle-class manufacturers had authority over the lives of their workforce by following a different type of paternalism; they applied rules and regulations which controlled every branch of factory life and promoted a gender-related segregated work culture. By means of such actions, manufacturers wished to influence and affect the social conduct and position of their workers.[4]

Plate 1 Female workers from the Halstead and Bocking mills in the 1850s. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office, D/DU 1721/2.)

Samuel Courtauld's paternalism was of a very distinct, often inconsistent nature: he, being a Unitarian and member of the local ruling class, espoused a gendered ideology which supported the association of women with the domestic sphere and that of males with the public domain. Of course, such beliefs were at odds with his being the major employer of females of the area. Therefore, in order to reconcile this contradiction, he adopted a distinctly gendered paternalism in order to control his female labour force. Of course, there is no way of knowing whether his gendered paternalism was deliberate or if it was an inevitable policy since the majority of his workforce was made up of female workers;[5] however, it was clearly Courtauld's conscious decision, because female workers were a cheap labour force. Moreover, his paternalism was

distinguished by a morality which was probably influenced by his religious beliefs. He was an adherent of Unitarianism,[6] which held that religion had the power to improve people's lives and philanthropy was one of the roads leading to people's advancement.[7] Therefore, Unitarians were usually active citizens involved in many social and public matters and they used various means in order to help poor people to climb up the social ladder.[8] With regard to the Courtauld family, paternalism and philanthropy functioned as a way of protecting their female workers from anything that affronted public morals and ensuring the social advancement of their workforce in general.

The Halstead Silk Mill, 1825-1881

This mill was the first significant attempt of Courtauld to set up a firm in the silk industry (Map 1). In 1825, the mill started operating under favourable conditions in Essex when silk manufacture was flourishing and soon gave immense profits to Courtauld. The Halstead mill bore many of the features that characterised the silk manufacture of the nineteenth century; female workers formed the majority of the workforce, they also occupied the least prestigious and lowest paid positions and were supervised by male overseers. Although there were few female workers who possessed higher-status positions such as overseers or gauze examiners,[9] their 'power' was strictly confined to overseeing other women or younger persons only. On the other hand, the few men that did work in the mill held higher and better paid positions and they were assigned tasks based on the scale of the labour hierarchy. The mill machinery attendants exceeded the wage of the majority of women almost by 50%, while the male overseers earned three or even four times as much. By promoting an unfair labour division based on gender, Courtauld maintained the customary patriarchal conventions and gave power and control to male workers. This practice also ensured that women remained dependent on male family members and, more importantly, defined their work in the mill as something secondary which should not prevent them from fulfilling their domestic responsibilities as wives and mothers.[10] Furthermore, their low incomes did not threaten the concept of the man being the breadwinner of the family, although it did provide a family income supplement.

A further restrictive measure was imposed on the workforce by Samuel Courtauld; a set of rules and regulations were given to the workforce in order to establish their duties and rights in the mill; instructions on how to use the machinery, rules about lighting and the usage of the kitchen during meal times were made known to the workers as soon as they entered the mill.[11] Furthermore, a system of fines and rewards was used for the discipline and the maintenance of the workers' productivity.[12] By and large, despite the fact that these rules applied to the whole workforce, women were more likely to be fined than men because they were under stricter control and constant surveillance. Suffice it to say that women who were caught stealing were dismissed at once, but only women were fired on these grounds precisely because only women (and not men) were checked before leaving the factory.[13] Furthermore, in this framework, Courtauld adopted an unusual policy regarding the re-employment of women. Despite the fact that he almost always re-employed his female workers who occasionally abandoned their work because of marriage, childrearing or other domestic responsibilities,[14] he also re-employed women who were dismissed on the grounds of poor performance, bad language or immoral lifestyle as in the case of unmarried women with illegitimate children or single co-habiting women.[15] As far as illegitimacy policy was concerned, Courtauld used to re-employ unmarried women with up to two illegitimate children only.[16] The motives that would explain these policies are not known but it would not be unfair to argue that behind his ambiguous sense of morality, economic motivations might be hidden.

In conclusion, Samuel Courtauld's silk mill in Halstead carried the features of the nineteenth-century factories which promoted a strictly gender-based labour division and was even more strengthened by various policies for the regulation of the work in the mill. The subordination of female hands was an essential premise of a mill culture which devalued women's working significance while at the same time stressing men's superiority. In this way, not only were patriarchal stereotypes reinforced within the factory but in the locality as well, since Courtauld's mills were the greatest source of employment in the area, especially for the female population of Essex.

The Development of Samuel Courtauld's Paternalism in Halstead Mill, 1825-1881

As soon as he was well established in the silk industry, Courtauld applied his paternalistic ideas. From 1847 onwards, and after the foundation of the evening school in Halstead, ten years of intensive and systematic attempt to advance the life of his workforce followed; he established various organisations in the area of Halstead, where his biggest factory was, and the decade was marked as the period when Courtauld's paternalism had reached its peak.[17] Matters such as education, health, and recreation were quite important for Samuel and his wife, Ellen, and they soon determined to address these issues. In this context, they came into contact with Miss Merryweather, an educated single middle-class woman who lived in London and had a salaried white-collar job.[18] In Halstead, she came as a 'social worker' to help the Courtaulds in

their venture to improve the status of their workers.[19] Thus, Courtauld set up among other institutions, a Factory School, a Factory Home and a Nursery in Halstead. The majority of these organisations mostly addressed female workers, although the Penny Bank, the Halstead Friendly Society, the Mechanics Institute and the New Benefit Society were designated for the male workers.[20] If the Factory Home and the Nursery are looked at in detail they provide a good basis for the presentation of Courtauld's gendered paternalism and the reaction of the female workers towards it, while also demonstrating the first strike in the mill, in May 1860.[21]

The Factory Home[22]

The morals of the female workers of the factory were an important matter for Courtauld; he paid such close attention to this aspect that chastity and propriety served as criteria for their employment. As it has been pointed out, the majority of the female workers in the factory were young single women who came not just from Halstead but from other, distant areas as well; as a result, these girls usually stayed in lodgings with relatives or strangers while working. Contemporaries were really sceptical about the conditions in these lodgings since there were many reports of abuse and sexual harassment. Such worries preoccupied Samuel and Ellen Courtauld who decided to establish a 'safe' place where their young single female workers of 'good character' could reside; of course, young single women with illegitimate children were explicitly excluded. Naturally, the majority of the working-class locals who earned some money by means of renting out accommodation to factory girls were opposed to this venture because it signified less business for them. As a result, their dislike of this venture seems to have had some appeal because many girls decided to reject the new lodging opportunity that was given to them.

In this context, the Factory Home was established in November 1849 in the southern part of Halstead approximately five minutes walk from the factory. It was a large residence with spacious rooms, gardens and stables. There were eight bedrooms with two to five beds each, a large sitting-room and a spacious dining room. A middle-aged woman was employed as the servant of the home and she was called a 'housekeeper'; she stayed in the house as well. Miss Merryweather offered her valuable help in setting up the house and she was actually in charge of its orderly running and the maintenance of order. She lived in the Factory Home, too. Every lodger was expected to pay one shilling a week, washing included, and two more pence which was kept as insurance, until the amount of five shillings was collected, to pay for their rent in case of illness. This policy was met with intense opposition and in fact few of the lodgers paid this amount. A number of rules were also given to the lodgers and a printed copy was posted on the dining room; the rules covered many matters such as the hours during which entrance into the house or bedrooms was allowed; the responsibility of the girls to keep their rooms orderly as well as regulations about food preparation. Moreover, the girls were expected to show exemplary behaviour, use decent language and follow the sanitary laws of the house. Failure to obey these rules would result in the expulsion of the girls. Of course, extreme suppression often brings adverse results. The girls expressed their indignation and discontent because control was suffocating and on several occasions they burnt copies of the rules. The most frequent reason for which girls were expelled, however, was violation of the time limitations.

What is more, the Factory Home operated as a place for education and recreation, not only for the lodgers but for other girls who often came to visit. Evening parties and teas were also organised and 'the most respectable and deserving' of the workers were invited to attend. As far as the parties are concerned, Miss Merryweather noted that great effort was made to familiarise the girls with 'higher tastes' in music, dance and manners and limit what they considered to be 'vulgar'; an attempt which was supported by Ellen Courtauld and other ladies and gentlemen who were frequently present. The latter usually noticed the improvement in the habits and manners of these young people. However, the Factory Home did not last long and in 1856 it was closed down because of limited demand; during the seven years of its operation there were 67 lodgers and the majority of them left the home after only a short period.

In any case, this well intentioned attempt of Courtauld to offer respectable lodgings to young single female workers did not have the response he expected either from the factory girls or the working-class townspeople. This might have been due to the fact that the girls felt that their employers tried to exercise too much control over their lives and their daily habits by strictly regulating life in the home and by imposing on them a way of life which was alien to them. Through these actions, Courtauld tried to contribute to the social improvement of his female workforce by familiarising them with middle-class habits and tastes that would 'refine' them while at the same time inculcating in them the idea of what he considered to be the proper type of womanly behaviour. However, the fact that relatively few girls chose to live in the Factory Home and resented its constraints is evidence to suggest that Courtauld's 'improving' politics were not welcome.

Infant Nursery[23]

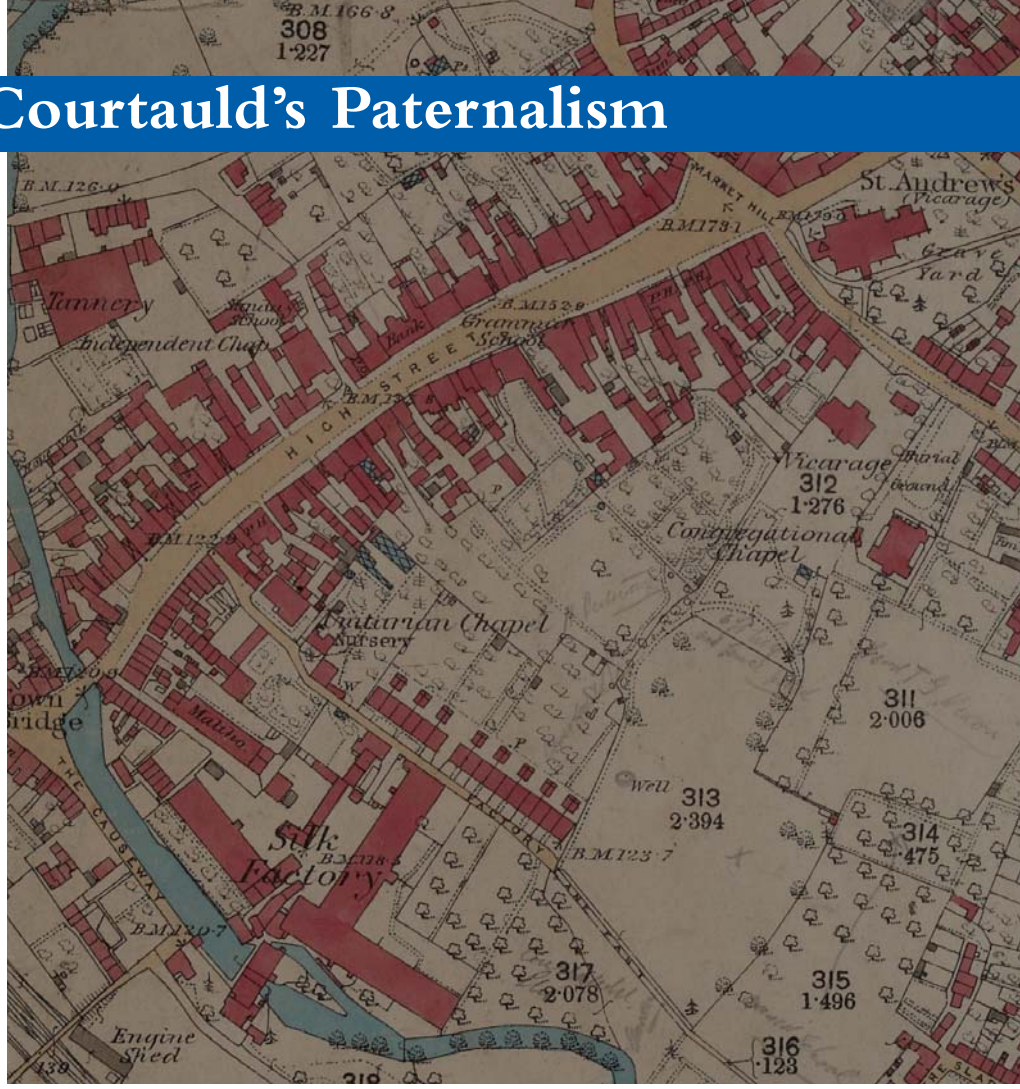
Among the many social evils often cited (and condemned) by contemporaries was the high rate of infant mortality in the

Samuel Courtauld's Paternalism

industrial areas because working mothers were said to 'neglect' their children to go out to work. Long before industrialisation, it was a common practice for working mothers either to leave their babies to an old baby-minder in the neighbourhood or to employ a little girl of seven or eight years of age to take care of their children. It was also not unusual for mothers to use drugs which induced sleep so the infants would sleep through their mothers' absence. This reality was by no means unknown in Halstead, and in December 1850 a Nursery for the benefit of working mothers was set up.

The Nursery aimed at infants from one month to children of two years of age; it was at the service of the married women of the factory, while the single working mothers with illegitimate children were excluded. However, the mothers had to abide by a set of rules in order for their children to be accepted into the nursery; the rules held that the children should be clean, vaccinated and in good health and the mothers should pay four pence for this service every time they took their children to the nursery. Miss Merryweather and Mrs Courtauld personally undertook the operation of the nursery and the care of the children. The nursery provided cradles, food and extra linen and clothes in case the mother did not bring some, not because of neglect but presumably because they did not have any.

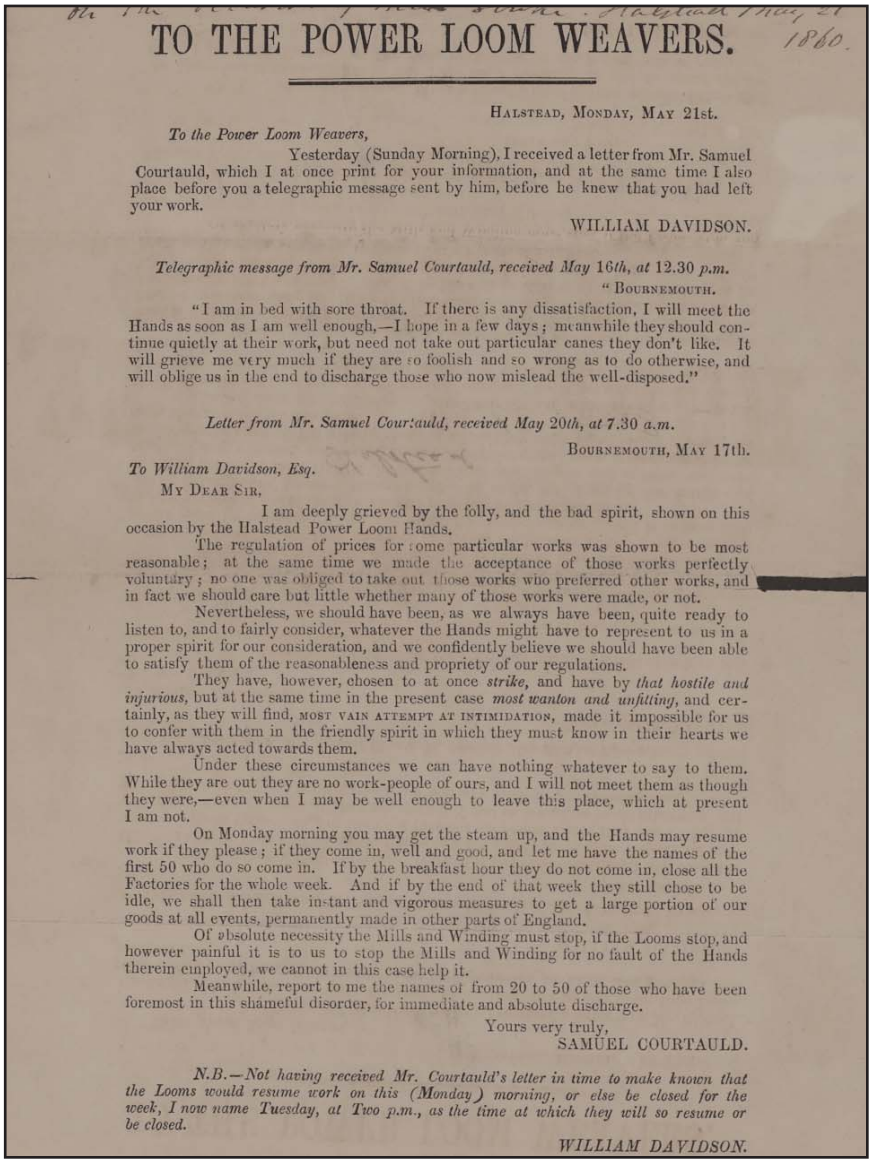
In the beginning, working mothers responded positively to this venture and soon the nursery had to be moved to a larger building near the factory which was bought for this reason. Quite often, when they had time to spare, the mothers were invited to assist in the care of their children so as to gain some more knowledge. On these occasions though, tensions arose because the mothers often disagreed with the way the cleaning and feeding of their babies was done. For example, a policy of the nursery was to wash



Map 1. Extract from 1st Ed 25" Ordnance Survey map, sheet 17-9, of Halstead showing the Silk Mill and various Chapels. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office.)

the children every morning when they were brought in by their mothers, something which the mothers thought unnecessary; they often criticised this tactic. Also, mothers had objections to the food that was provided, as they thought it was insufficient for their children.

Three years later, in September 1853, the spread of bronchitis among the children in the nursery served as an excuse for the mothers to stop taking their children there; hence, the closure of the nursery was unavoidable.[24] As a result, another attempt of the Courtaulds to help their workforce ended ignominiously. In the case of the nursery, on the one hand it was perhaps the differences in child rearing between working-class mothers and middle-class women that did not permit this venture to prosper as well as because of the practical difficulties of carrying an infant from home to work every morning. On the other hand, the nursery cost four pence a day for child care; thus, using the nursery every working day cost working mothers with one child two shillings per week, while a baby-minder only cost one shilling and six pence. In any case, the establishment of the nursery for married mothers was contradictory to Courtauld's domestic ideology; it was a paradox that a man who believed that women, especially married ones, should be in the house, promoted their employment by providing them with organisations, such as nurseries, which would help them fulfil their duties as mothers. Nevertheless, it could also be claimed that since economic conditions made the employment of married women a necessity, Samuel Courtauld encouraged it in a framework which did not overlook their roles as wives and mothers and which also aimed to teach them how to be better wives and mothers, at least according to middle-class ideals.



TO THE POWER LOOM WEAVERS.

1860.

HALSTEAD, MONDAY, MAY 21st.

To the Power Loom Weavers,

Yesterday (Sunday Morning), I received a letter from Mr. Samuel Courtauld, which I at once print for your information, and at the same time I also place before you a telegraphic message sent by him, before he knew that you had left your work.

WILLIAM DAVIDSON.

Telegraphic message from Mr. Samuel Courtauld, received May 16th, at 12.30 p.m.

"BOURNEMOUTH.

"I am in bed with sore throat. If there is any dissatisfaction, I will meet the Hands as soon as I am well enough,—I hope in a few days; meanwhile they should continue quietly at their work, but need not take out particular canes they don't like. It will grieve me very much if they are so foolish and so wrong as to do otherwise, and will oblige us in the end to discharge those who now mislead the well-disposed."

Letter from Mr. Samuel Courtauld, received May 20th, at 7.30 a.m.

BOURNEMOUTH, MAY 17th.

To William Davidson, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am deeply grieved by the folly, and the bad spirit, shown on this occasion by the Halstead Power Loom Hands.

The regulation of prices for some particular works was shown to be most reasonable; at the same time we made the acceptance of those works perfectly voluntary; no one was obliged to take out those works who preferred other works, and in fact we should care but little whether many of those works were made, or not.

Nevertheless, we should have been, as we always have been, quite ready to listen to, and to fairly consider, whatever the Hands might have to represent to us in a proper spirit for our consideration, and we confidently believe we should have been able to satisfy them of the reasonableness and propriety of our regulations.

They have, however, chosen to at once *strike*, and have by *that hostile and injurious*, but at the same time in the present case *most wanton and unfitting*, and certainly, as they will find, MOST VAIN ATTEMPT AT INTIMIDATION, made it impossible for us to confer with them in the friendly spirit in which they must know in their hearts we have always acted towards them.

Under these circumstances we can have nothing whatever to say to them. While they are out they are no work-people of ours, and I will not meet them as though they were,—even when I may be well enough to leave this place, which at present I am not.

On Monday morning you may get the steam up, and the Hands may resume work if they please; if they come in, well and good, and let me have the names of the first 50 who do so come in. If by the breakfast hour they do not come in, close all the Factories for the whole week. And if by the end of that week they still chose to be idle, we shall then take instant and vigorous measures to get a large portion of our goods at all events, permanently made in other parts of England.

Of absolute necessity the Mills and Winding must stop, if the Looms stop, and however painful it is to us to stop the Mills and Winding for no fault of the Hands therein employed, we cannot in this case help it.

Meanwhile, report to me the names of from 20 to 50 of those who have been foremost in this shameful disorder, for immediate and absolute discharge.

Yours very truly,

SAMUEL COURTAULD.

N.B.—Not having received Mr. Courtauld's letter in time to make known that the Looms would resume work on this (Monday) morning, or else be closed for the week, I now name Tuesday, at Two p.m., as the time at which they will so resume or be closed.

WILLIAM DAVIDSON.

Fig. 1. Courtauld's notice to his weavers during the strike of May 1860. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office, D/F 3/2/103.)

Resistance

Despite the fact that Courtauld's paternalism and benevolence was acknowledged by his workers, the latter did not hesitate to oppose his plans or to express their dissatisfaction in cases where they felt that their interests were jeopardised. Already from the first decade of the operation of Halstead factory the introduction of new machinery in the mill bred dissent in the factory because it was thought that it would 'throw out of employment some of the weavers'.[25] Although the workers did not manage to stop the introduction of the machinery, their stance proved that they would not sheepishly accept actions that immediately affected their lives.

Another incident along the same lines occurred in May 1860;[26] for certain tasks at the mill, the engines used greater power and speeded up the looms; thus, more work was done in less time. This resulted in a decision to reduce the wages and a disappointed workforce responded with a strike; approximately 600 workers left and continued on strike for several days trying to persuade the rest of the workers to join them. Courtauld, who was ill, sent a telegram to the workers asking them to return to their posts until he recovered and was able to meet them. (Fig. 1) He also threatened to dismiss those who tried to influence those who remained at the factory. However, the workers, the majority of whom were women, did not comply and as a result, on 21st May, Courtauld sent another letter in which he said that he was determined not only to close the factory for another week, if they still refused to comply, but he would also transfer his establishments to another locality. What is more, he dismissed around 20 to 50 of the most fierce dissenters during this event.[27]

The determination of Courtauld in the confrontation with the workers in the first strike had negative results in the attempt of female workers to improve their wages. Additionally, the lack of a trade union among the workforce and the divisions amongst the workers resulted in a debacle. Courtauld retained the upper hand in terms of industrial relations in the Halstead factory. However, the strike of May 1860 was the only event which disturbed the good relationship between employers and employees between the years 1825-1881, namely during Courtauld's life and management of the factory.

Conclusion

Resentment was not only harboured owing to matters of work. Earlier in this article we discussed some of Courtauld's attempts to help the social improvement of his workforce through various institutes and services; he failed precisely because of the lack of enthusiasm of the workers for these projects, and especially for those projects clearly predestined for women, like the Factory Home and the Infant Nursery. In the first case, women could not tolerate the amount of control over their daily lives and they often expressed their indignation either by leaving the Home shortly after their arrival or by symbolic manifestations of their anger, such as burning copies of the Home rules. Additionally, in the case of the nursery, many mothers did not approve of some of its policies in terms of the cleaning and feeding of the infants. The attempt of Miss Merryweather and Mrs Courtauld to teach the

mothers some important sanitary rules was not successful and they often remarked that 'what was done to the nursery was undone by the carelessness or ignorance of the mothers at home.'[28]

In conclusion, the gendered paternalism of Samuel Courtauld caused, in my opinion, a 'gendered' resistance; namely, the emphasis on the protection of the morality and femininity of the female workers and the effort to classify them as an ideal middle-class model of the 'angel of the house' caused indignation on the part of the working-class women. As far as was possible and practical, working-class women seemed to have been shrewdly selective in their dealings with the various Courtauld projects and they took advantage of what was fitted to their habits and aspirations. Thus, they attended the evening classes at school and participated in the various social gatherings and tea parties, while they were much less enthusiastic about using services which they thought were opposed to their habits. On the other hand, as far as the male workers were concerned, Courtauld's paternalism did not try to exert such strict control over their lives as in the case of the female workers. Of course, Courtauld tried to inculcate in them middle-class ideas and decorum, (for example, through the lectures in the Factory and Mechanics Institutes) but his 'male' paternalism did not have any moral nuance nor did it intervene in more personal matters such as their moral standards or their duties as husbands and fathers. Thus demonstrating Samuel Courtauld's paternalistic policies it becomes obvious that, in spite of carrying many features of nineteenth-century paternalism, it was distinctly gendered. The real motives behind his tactics will probably never be known. It could be assumed that by this policy he tried on the one hand to serve his economic interests by employing a cheap labour force and on the other, he offered an enticingly 'moral', 'safe' workplace to working-class women whose dire poverty forced them outside of their 'proper' domestic sphere.

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1. This article is based on my MA thesis, *Women's Work and Paternalism in the Industrial Revolution: The Case of the Female Weavers in Samuel III Courtauld's Silk Factory in Halstead, 1825-881,* University of Essex, (September, 2010).
2. D. Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England*, (London, 1979), p.1. For example, the large number of male and female workers in the textile factories of North England called for a different managerial policy from that employed towards the significantly smaller number of mostly female workers in the silk mills of Samuel Courtauld in Essex.
3. P. Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics: the Culture of the Factory in later Victorian England*, (Brighton, 1980), p.94; Roberts, p. 3.
4. Joyce, p.xxi.
5. J. Lown, *Gender and Class during Industrialisation: a Study of the Halstead Silk Industry in Essex, 1825-1900*, (Colchester, 1983), p.208. In 1861 there were 901 female workers and only 114 male workers.
6. F.A. Christie, 'Unitarianism', *The American Journal of Theology*, 21:4 (1917), pp. 556 -557. Unitarianism was a sect which had its roots in Protestantism and spread across Britain during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
7. D.W. Howe, *The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy, 1805-1861*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), pp.238-239, 241. For Unitarians, philanthropy was 'a path of virtue', a spiritual action which benefited both the benefactor and the beneficiary. However, they were opposed to charity because, according to their philosophy, it could lead poor people to 'negligence', 'idleness', and 'improvidence'.
8. Christie, pp.566-567.
9. Lown, p.208.
10. Ibid., pp.224, 208, 212, 70.
11. Essex Record Office (ERO), D/F 3/2/25, Drafts and copies of rules and instruction to staff, p.39. Based on the rules, it was their duty to turn off their gas light during day time and when they finished work in the evening, as well as to sort out the materials and leave the working space orderly when they finished.
12. Lown, p.16. For instance, workers were liable to a one-shilling fine in case they left a window open, came to work shabbily dressed or did not work as effectively as expected. Talking, singing and whistling were also forbidden during work and these practices were fined one shilling as well. ERO, D/F 3/2/25, pp.17, 19, 67, 107. Smoking was also prohibited in places where women and children worked and any breach of the rule was fined three pence; on the contrary, in men's work-places such as the Mechanics' Shops, the Dye House and the Gas House, as well as on the factory premises during meal times, smoking was allowed. Heavier fines of five shillings were imposed when for example the workers left an aperture of the gas pipes open or if they blocked them with pale. D.C. Coleman, *Courtaulds: An Economic and Social History*, (Oxford, 1969), p.251. Additionally, frequent tardiness had negative consequences; latecomers were not allowed to work until the next meal or the next day; this policy was much stricter than fines. On the other hand, the industrious and disciplined workers were rewarded with overtime payments, and free beer in the case of men. There was also a three pence bonus per packet of silk crape if the end product was of excellent quality.
13. Lown, p.375.
14. Ibid., p.246. Marriage was accountable for 18% of the cases in which women left the mill, while childbirth and 'staying at home' only 8.3%. Moving away and domestic service reached 10.7 and 12.2 % respectively.
15. Some examples are: ERO, D/F 3/3/2, Register of weavers employed, 1830-84: Sarah Newton was dismissed in 1853 because of bad language but she was re-employed some months later. She was dismissed for the same reason in May, 1855 and was re-employed in January, 1857. She finally left because she got married in June 1863;

D/F 3/3/5, Register of winders and redrawers employed, 1830-1918: Charlotte Barker was dismissed in September, 1868 because she stole leftover fabric but was re-employed in July 1875; D/F 3/3/6, Register of weavers employed, 1833-1908: Marianne Edward was dismissed in April 1841 owing to her cohabitation with a man but in 1861 she was re-employed.

16. Some examples of this policy are: ERO, D/F 3/3/6: Eliza Bae was dismissed because of having a second illegitimate child; D/F 3/3/6: Sarah Sargent was dismissed in 1870 because she bore her second illegitimate child. Some examples of unmarried mothers with two illegitimate children: D/F 3/3/6: Elizabeth Argent left willingly in 1871 because of a second illegitimate child but she was re-employed in the firm some years later. Emma Newman was dismissed in June, 1873, for a second illegitimate but she was re-employed in September, 1875.
17. M. Merryweather, *Experience of Factory Life: being a record of fourteen years' work at Mr. Courtauld's Silk Mill at Halstead, in Essex*, (London, 1862), p.73.
18. L. Davidoff & C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: men and women of the English middle class, 1780-1850*, (London, 1987), p.306. In the 1851 local census, Miss Merryweather was recorded as a 'Moral Missionary Amongst Factory Hands'. She arrived in Halstead in early November 1847 to set up a school for factory girls but during her stay she was involved in many philanthropic activities alongside Samuel and Ellen Courtauld. Merryweather, pp. ii, 77. She also kept notes regarding the conditions in the factory and the locality in general and on the improvement of female workers during her mission, which she later published. The idea of publishing an account of her experience at Courtauld's mill aimed to show to the public that if manufacturers and philanthropists were actively involved in the improvement of their workers' lives, they could contribute to the decline of the widespread wretchedness among factory-workers. As a result, her invaluable account proves to be a good source of information regarding the paternalistic and philanthropic action of Samuel Ellen Courtauld as well as the effects of these policies upon the female workers. Moreover, she offers a good description of the educational, health and recreational standards which the factory workers enjoyed. Of course, the information is given through her personal perspective which was definitely affected by her social status; there might also be a touch of exaggeration on her behalf, in order to present herself as a capable teacher. Essentially, the information about the Courtaulds might have also been given in the most positive light possible.
19. Ibid., p.306.
20. Lown, p.443.
21. The selection of these institutions and the strike mostly aim to show Courtauld's gendered paternalism and the female resistance towards this policy and do not try to blacken the effect of Courtauld's paternalism. Contrary to the failure of the Factory Home and the Nursery, the Factory School and the Amusement society were quite successful among the female workforce which positively made use of them.
22. For more information about the Factory Home and its operation see Merryweather, pp.43-50, 60-64.
23. For more information about the Nursery see Merryweather, pp.11, 50-55, 86-87.
24. According to Miss Merryweather, despite the appreciation of several mothers for this service, the nursery never accommodated more than 15 children at one time, since many mothers preferred to leave their children at home with a young baby-minder instead of exposing them every morning to the cold weather. However, Ellen Courtauld aspired to re-open the nursery in the event of satisfactory demand. Ibid., pp.54-55.
25. *Essex Independent*, November, 1836. As cited in A.F.J. Brown, *English History from Essex Sources, 1750-1900*, (Chelmsford, 1952), p. 11.
26. For more information see *The Essex Standard*, 25/05/1860 & ERO, D/F 3/2/103, Papers concerning labour, 1860-1909.
27. Although the latter were dismissed, they were eventually re-employed. ERO, D/F 3/3/7, Register of twisters, warpers and plug winders employed, 1840-1919. An example of this is the case of Marianne Crawfield who was dismissed during this strike but she was re-employed later; in 1864, she is recorded in the Register of Employees as weaver number 399.
28. Merryweather, p.54.

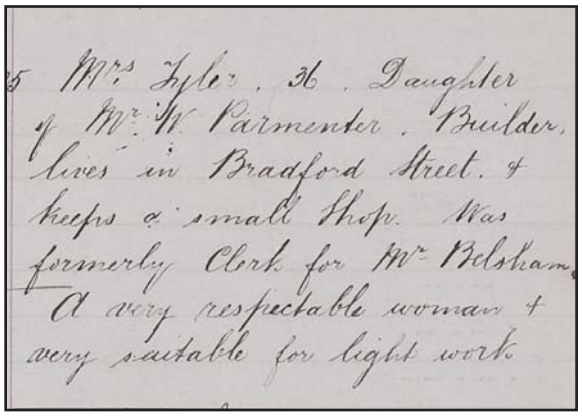
Mrs Tyler. 36. Daughter of Mr W. Parmenter. Builder, lives in Bradford Street. & keeps a small Shop. Was formerly Clerk for Mr Belsham. A very respectable woman & very suitable for light work.

Fig 2. Comments on Mrs Tyler's application for work, September 25th 1873: 'A very respectable woman + very suitable for light work.' (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office, D/F 3/2/24.)

Acknowledgements
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Front-Line County:

Essex and the Blitz 1940-1941

by

Paul Rusiecki

The years 2010 and 2011 mark the 70th anniversary of the Blitz, an event which has assumed iconic status in the history of the Second World War and in the historical memory of the British people. The geographical local of Essex made sure that that it was in the front line of the German onslaught. Chronologically the Blitz occurred over a period of nine months from the beginning of September 1940 to mid-May 1941. This article will examine the impact that these raids had on Essex.

Air raids began in July and August with 'tip-and-run' coastal attacks by solitary or small numbers of German aircraft, light and widespread bombing of inland towns and armed reconnaissance flights. The tempo of raids increased in early September. Tilbury was extensively bombed on 1st-2nd September and from 5th September the Thurrock riverside area was constantly attacked, causing extensive fires along the oil wharves which required fire brigades to be called in from as far away as the Midlands.[1] This was a direct consequence of an RAF raid on Berlin on 25th August. Hitler, who had boasted that German soil was invulnerable to air attack, had been incensed by this raid and on 5th September he ordered London to be bombed as the first part of a campaign to raze Britain's cities to the ground as well as forcing RAF Fighter Command to oppose all German raids.

On Saturday 7th September 1940 the sirens sounded across the metropolitan area on a clear blue evening sky at 4.57pm as 364 bombers, accompanied by 515 fighters, in close formation and at a great height approached London.[2] Their target was the Port of London but as many boroughs in Metropolitan Essex were adjacent to or near the Thames, and as bomb-aiming was not an exact science, a large area of south-east Essex was hit. East and West Ham were severely bombed but every local authority in metropolitan Essex was also hit. High-explosive and incendiary bombs began to fall at 5.35pm, and this continued unabated for 90 minutes causing widespread devastation. The first bombs fell on the Ford works at Dagenham. A few minutes later St Mary's Hospital in Stratford received a direct hit. The oil storage tanks at Thameshaven near Tilbury had been set alight on 6th September and were now bombed again. The fires burned for days and sent smoke up to a height of 10,000 feet. The Anglo-American Oil Works at Purfleet were attacked for an hour and 600 firemen fought the huge blazes which resulted. 200 firemen were overcome by fumes and one of them and five employees were killed.[3] Silvertown, a crowded working class area of West Ham with a population of some 13,000 people crammed into a square mile, full of slums and factories, was reduced to a blazing inferno. By 19.48pm there were only two factories left intact. Road communications were reduced to a single line along Silvertown Way. Water mains were smashed and supplies were polluted by sewage. Public utilities – gas, electricity, and particularly water – were severely damaged, which caused problems for the fire services which were faced with huge numbers of fires. Fire brigades had to erect static canvas water tanks filled from water tankers. Damage to electric cables was so severe that fire officers worked using candles placed in jam jars. The massive amount of glass from broken windows hampered civil defence vehicles and an appeal was made to other local authorities for mechanical sweepers. The fire brigades of Dagenham, Barking, and East and West Ham all called for aid and by 8pm over 500 pumps had arrived from other areas.[4]

The raiders left by 6.30pm but a new wave of bombers, guided by the immense fires, arrived two hours later. Wave after wave of aircraft came over until 5am the next morning, dropping tons of high explosives, oil bombs and incendiaries into the inferno below. By then there were nine major conflagrations, 19 large fires and hundreds of smaller ones raging across the area. Molten tar from a Silvertown factory trapped fire engines, ambulances and civil defence vehicles in its sticky wake. Burning barges drifted down the Thames before floating back with the incoming tide. Several ships in the docks were hit and set ablaze. The solitary escape route from Silvertown was cut during the second raid and the river was used to evacuate civilians trapped between the dock fires and the blazing factories. Beckton Gas Works in East Ham, the largest of its kind in Europe, which supplied central London, received direct hits by high-explosive and incendiary bombs and blazed ferociously. Parts of Metropolitan Essex had no gas supply for three weeks. East Ham's shopping area was devastated and there were countless numbers of streets closed by falling buildings. Railway lines were hit including the large marshalling yards at Temple Mills. At West Ham the situation was so desperate that rescue services attempting to enter the borough at 2am had to return home as they were unable to penetrate the fires and general devastation.

Unexploded bombs – at this stage a largely unforeseen problem – aggravated the situation.[5] At West Ham the fires of 7th-8th September were still burning three days later.

After this devastating attack the Germans established a clear pattern for their raiding. Daylight raids over Metropolitan Essex became something of a rarity as RAF Fighter Command continued to oppose *Luftwaffe* raids in large numbers. The Germans, in an attempt to reduce their losses, switched to bombing at night. However, night raids, which most people now identify as the key feature of the Blitz, were sustained over a very long period (Fig. 1). Along with the capital, Essex was attacked for 57 consecutive nights up to 2nd-3rd November. Even after that the *Luftwaffe* returned to bomb on 35 of the next 50 nights up to Christmas Eve. Thirteen of these raids can be categorised as heavy but none were on the scale of 7th-8th September. However, from about November the *Luftwaffe*'s concentration on other cities combined with adverse weather conditions saw a marked reduction in raids and after a brief return of raiding in March 1941 they virtually died away in the spring. Only on three occasions, 18th-19th March, 17th –18th April and 10th-11th May was there a return to heavy raiding. Ironically after months of attacks the raid of 18th-19th March was the heaviest that the county as a whole experienced during the whole of the Blitz. Essex outside of the Metropolitan area was also subject to the same relentless raiding pattern, and there was hardly a town or village which did not experience at least one 'incident.'

How did the people of Essex respond to the Blitz? There was widespread anger at this indiscriminate bombing. 'Goering's air murderers' was how one newspaper described the *Luftwaffe*, arguing that its work was 'on a par with the snapping and snarling of a mad dog, or the vicious biting of a cornered rat.'[6] Such feelings were intensified because British people believed that by contrast, RAF raids only targeted military objectives. 'This may be war, but it is not the British way of waging it' contended the *Burnham Advertiser*.[7] The raids left people in no doubt about the purpose behind them. The same newspaper noted that 'Their one and only object is to strike terror into the hearts of our civilian population in the hope that our Government will be driven to open negotiations with upstart rulers, who will flinch at no atrocity which they think will serve their ends.'[8]

At first it was feelings of profound shock, fear and confusion which manifested themselves in the wake of the raids. This was perhaps only to be expected as the horrors which had been seen on cinema screens for so long finally became a grim reality. This was particularly the case in those metropolitan boroughs which bore the brunt of the early raids, especially West Ham. Here the somewhat moribund ruling Labour council had not proved dynamic in the provision of air raid shelters, which were not made habitable for months after the Blitz began, nor in civil defence matters generally. Lingering pacifist sentiments meant that Air Raid Precaution (ARP) arrangements had been entered into reluctantly and without conviction.[9] On 7th September in Canning Town, thousands of people, many of them women and children, crowded into inadequately protected buildings. About a thousand were crammed into a public shelter in Oriental Road, most of them described by the authorities as suffering from 'bomb-shock', not helped by the fact that huge fires were blazing around them.[10] Evacuation buses were unable to reach Silvertown and many residents spent the night exposed on open ground. Hundreds sheltered under the open arches of a railway viaduct cared for by civil defence officials acting in an unofficial capacity. They provided hot food and drinks and tried to ease the feeling that the borough had abandoned them.[11] Buses managed to reach the devastated areas on 8th September but when the raids began on the previous day an unofficial exodus out of West Ham and nearby boroughs had already begun, even though there were no reception arrangements set up for them. Most headed away from the horror surrounding them, eastwards into Essex or northwards into Epping Forest. In the next few days some were gradually rounded up and dispersed locally. Chingford accommodated the greatest number - 7,000 refugees by 12th September. Over 400 refugees had arrived in Maldon by early October. Everything they possessed had been destroyed and their ration books and identity cards were all they possessed.[12]

The disquiet at the scale of the early raids was heightened by the fact that the fires which burnt created an eerie red glow which could be seen on the skyline throughout much of south and west Essex. Second hand reports of the devastation were no less terrifying. Margery Allingham, the famous crime writer who lived at Tolleshunt D'Arcy, sent two men to deliver furniture to a house near the British Museum shortly after the 7th September raid. What they witnessed on their journeys through east London affected them profoundly. 'Their horror was far more impressive to us than any mere recital on the wireless, or even the photos in the newspapers', she said, 'I looked petrified for days.'[13] There was certainly a feeling that London's defences had proved to be inadequate. Eric Rudsdale, a curator at Colchester Castle wrote, 'The extraordinary thing is, why did the Germans wait so long? If it is as easy as this, why did they not bomb London a year ago? Even more harm could have been done.'[14]

The onset of the Blitz added a new intensity to the ongoing debate about shelter provision throughout the county, which in many areas was considered to be at best inadequate and at worst non-existent. The belief that nowhere was safe from attack, not even rural

Essex, provoked a flurry of protests at what was seen as the dilatoriness of the authorities. For people caught in the open during a raid the *Woodford Times* advised people to 'Keep calm, make use of the best protection near at hand, and above all lie flat on the ground… Lie flat, face downwards, supporting the head on folded arms, keeping the chest just off the ground, to avoid the earth shock of an explosion.'[15] However, for most people more substantial provision was required. In urban areas there were renewals of demands for deep underground shelters which had already been rejected by the Government before the war, Colchester Borough Council rejecting them in 1939 on the grounds that the area's geology made the cost prohibitive. In Chelmsford a Citizen's Air Raid Shelter Committee was formed and buttressed by a petition of over 5,000 residents it demanded the immediate erection of bomb-proof shelters for all residents. However, although a deputation was seen by the council it rejected their demand. The council argued that it had already provided public shelters for 10% of the population (about 3,000 people), which met the government's requirement. It also reasoned that the provision of deep shelters would contravene Government policy, which was to disperse the population rather than concentrate it in large shelters, hence the distribution of Anderson shelters.[16]

At Ongar a councillor asserted that 'we must vigorously protect and fight for the rights of the people.' Another demanded that public shelter provision be increased to 25 or 30% of the population. Throughout the county numbers of parents were not sending their children to school because there were no shelters. In most small villages, shelters, not even school shelters, had been erected because they were not in areas considered vulnerable. After 7th September this was not the view of residents and parents. Runwell Parish Council and the Ratepayers' Association

The "alert" was given at 18.05 and was not cleared until 04.45 next morning, the earliest start to night raiding and the longest period under "Red" to date.

Bombing proceeded throughout the night with all types of missiles. Particularly heavy attacks with I.B.'s., were delivered on the whole of the Group, but were generally ineffective. A few paramines were used.

BARKING: A heavy incendiary attack was launched between 00.35 and 01.55 which resulted in numerous fires. Most of these were rapidly controlled and caused little damage but one at Ibbertson's factory, River Road, a soap and candle manufacturers, gutted the building. In all there were about 70 small fires.

A U.X.P.M. was located in the River Roding and caused a lot of trouble. Two important factories had to be evacuated and traffic diversions and restrictions were considerable.

CHINGFORD: The 17.00 hour situation report on the 22nd sums up the position in Chingford and is reproduced here. "Some hundreds of I.B. fell on the town but were quickly dealt with. No major fires resulted. Slight damage to residential property".

CHIGWELL: Two houses were damaged by A.A. Fire and needed first aid repair.

DAGENHAM: 12 H.E. bombs fell on Parsloes Park at 23.02 and other open spaces of which 2 failed to explode. There was no damage or casualties but one of the U.X.B's., closed two roads. A number of I.B.'s., were rapidly controlled and damage and casualties prevented. It was estimated that 180 I.B.'s., fell on the Ford Motor Works, but all fires were rapidly controlled and production was not affected.

EAST HAM: H.E., and I.B. were dropped at intervals between 23.11 and 00.35 but caused only minor damage to small properties. Numerous fires were rapidly extinguished.

Casualties were 3 seriously and 2 slightly injured.

ILFORD: Two paramines and showers of incendiaries between 22.20 and 00.20 hours caused a lot of damage in this Borough. The I.B.'s., resulted in no major fires, but ignited a damaged gas main and generally complicated rescue and clearance work.

No vital installations were affected but damage to houses was extensive.

In the Lime Grove/New North Road area 12 houses and bungalows were demolished, 60 seriously and 400 less seriously damaged. In the Brunswick Gardens/ Tomswood Hill district 350 houses suffered, 30 seriously.

An old U.X.B. detonated, probably through ground shock and caused some damage, but there were no casualties owing to evacuation.

Heavy reinforcements of Resuce Parties were requested and eight were sent in.

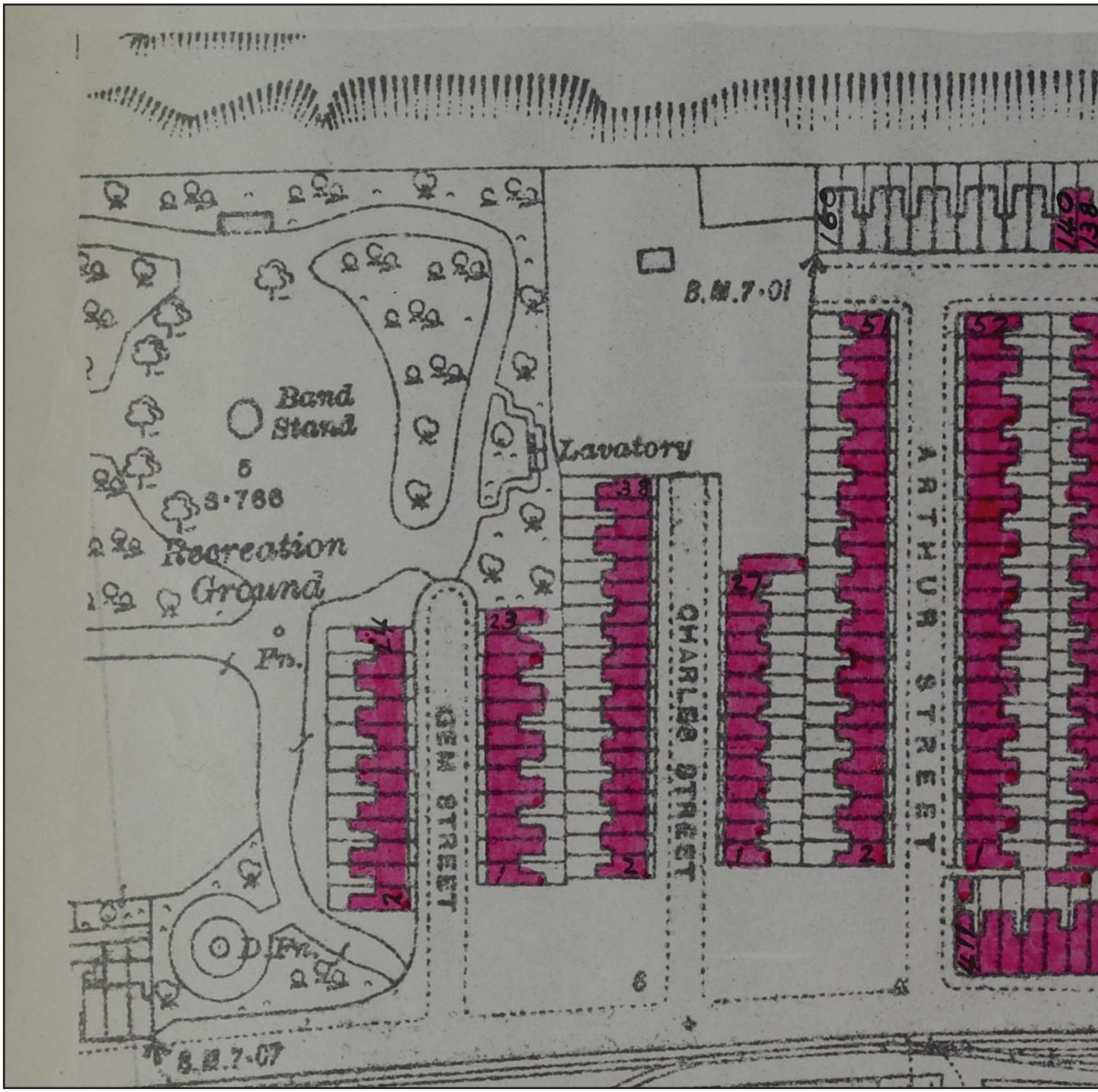
Casualties were 3 killed, 10 seriously and 19 slightly injured.

LEYTON had a quiet night, no incidents being reported.

WALTHAMSTOW was sharply attacked with I.B. between 03.28 and 03.58, it was estimated between 500 and 600 fell in the Borough. No serious fires developed and damage was slight with no casualties. Several U.X.A.A.Shells were reported.

Fig. 1. This report covering raids of 21-22/09/1940, has several key features. Firstly the length of time between the alert and the all-clear suggests that many residents may well have spent almost 11 hours in their shelters. This was not unusual during raids in 1940-41. Secondly, although this page does not include all the UDCs and boroughs in Group 7, only two, Leyton and Waltham Holy Cross, escaped damage. This too was not uncommon. Thirdly, the widespread use of IBs (incendiary bombs) caused enormous damage, in this case in Ilford. Fourthly, para(chute) mines had a devastating impact. Only hours before this alert began four members of a Bomb Disposal Squad were killed at Dagenham when a para mine they were trying to disarm exploded. Also note the report of unexploded anti-aircraft shells fired by defending guns - yet another hazard. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office, C/W 2/3/2.)

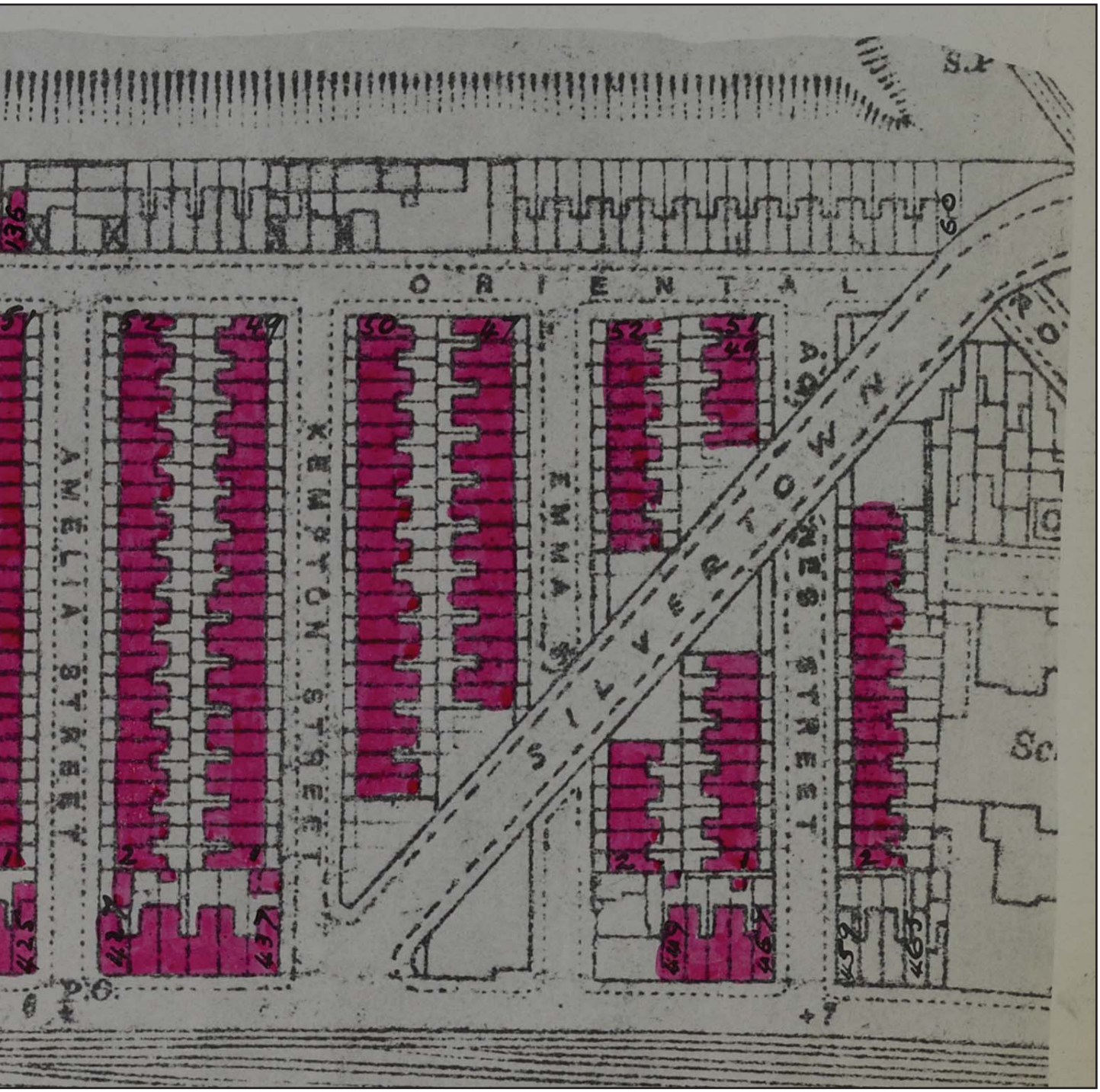
Essex and the Blitz 1940-1941



applied for shelters and sent a 200 strong petition to the Home Office to support their case. Its protests got them nowhere. When they appealed to Chelmsford Rural District Council they were told that they were no more vulnerable than anywhere else. A public meeting in the village of Bardfield unanimously passed a resolution criticising Braintree Rural District Council (RDC) for its failure to provide a school shelter. A newspaper report noted that 'Several mothers made indignant speeches, and declared that they would not send their children to school until a shelter was provided.' One angry councillor from Saffron Walden, Stanley Wilson, addressed the meeting and said, 'Rich people have been wise. They have built shelters for their children, but I want shelters for all children, rich and poor.'[17] Local authorities in Essex responded very sensitively to the demand for shelters because they saw it as an implied criticism of their wartime policies, especially their competence in protecting local residents. It is not surprising that in West Ham, Leyton and Chelmsford the authorities reacted defensively by attempting to smear shelter campaigners, by claiming that they had been infiltrated by Communist agitators.[18]

Eventually shelter provision was extended in both urban and rural areas. In July 1940 a meeting of all local authorities in Essex urged the planning of domestic shelters along lines laid down by the Home Office. This was particularly the case where parts of the population lived in the vicinity of factories or other likely enemy targets.[19] Chelmsford Borough

Essex and the Blitz 1940–1941



Map 1. This map shows those houses, marked in red, that were to be demolished due to extensive bomb damage. It demonstrated that parts of West Ham, subject to incessant air raids in the autumn and winter of 1940-41, had practically no habitable buildings left. Parts of the borough, like this one, became virtual ghost towns. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office, C/W 4/36.)

Council took such steps for all houses within a 250-yard radius of the Crompton Parkinson, Hoffmann and Marconi works. The houses in these 22 streets were strengthened by the building of blast walls and 219 six-person type communal shelters.[20]

Nevertheless people soon began to adjust to the Blitz. Morale was helped by official reports that more enemy aircraft were being destroyed than was actually the case. So too did the surprising realisation that casualties were far fewer than the dire predictions of the previous 20 years. People carried on with their lives, accepting as normal the unusual nature of their changed circumstances. As Margery Allingham noted, the idea of 'bomb-bore' quickly set in as everyone accumulated their own typical stories of the Blitz.[21] The ability of people to adapt to the Blitz was actually helped by the largely predictable nature of German air raids. The sirens signalling the approach of the enemy usually sounded at about 8pm, which meant that most people had had time to return from work, have

Plate 1. In what should be a normal family photo, Mrs Young, wife of Mr Arnold Young of Arnold & Co. of Chelmsford, holds her daughter Marion in the garden of their house, 'Greystones' on Main Road, Broomfield. In the background a wall of sandbags have been placed to protect their French doors from bomb blasts. *c.*1940. (Photo courtesy of Mrs M. Palmer.)

their tea and prepare for the night ahead before heading to the Anderson shelter or communal shelter. This unchanging routine is typified by this description of those sheltering in Chelmsford's Shire Hall: 'Some come early in the afternoon to stake their claim. Some wheel perambulators containing crying infants; others carry bedclothes. After their night's sleep, the 'shelterers' depart, and the keepers clear up, ready for the night to come. The same faces will be seen again, in the same places, and at almost precisely the same hour.'[22]

It is difficult to be precise about where people sought shelter. The Government had distributed Anderson shelters because it favoured dispersing the population to keep casualty figures down. However, in many parts of Essex the nature of the soil meant that these shelters were often damp or flooded, and in some parts they were simply not feasible. Even though thousands of them were provided with concrete floors and sides they remained unpopular because they were cold, uncomfortable, and above all they did not keep out the racket of exploding bombs and anti-aircraft fire. Very soon people shunned both Anderson shelters and surface communal shelters, preferring instead to risk sleeping in their own homes. At Billericay for instance, a council survey revealed that although there was shelter accommodation for 2,443 people, only 384 were sleeping in them overnight.[23] Mary Hoodless of Hornchurch went to the Anderson shelter at first but then stayed in the house. The shelter gave her terrible back ache and leg pains, and on one occasion a bomb blast made her neighbour's nose bleed for two days. Her diary records the misery of the incessant noise from the sirens, guns, bomb-blasts and shrapnel.[24] Helena Britton from Walthamstow told her daughter in America, 'It's about nine weeks now since dad and I undressed to go to bed…We made it [the shelter] as comfortable as possible, but we all get so stiff owing to restricted movement.'[25] However in Metropolitan Essex thousands of people made the nightly trek to shelter in underground stations. Conditions were at first incredibly squalid and local authorities were slow to make them habitable. One of the largest was the Gainsborough Road tunnel, part of an unfinished tube line in Leyton. One observer noted that 'The discomfort that comes of herding, the stone-covered floor, the foetid atmosphere, are nothing compared with the peace of mind which comes from the security these steel girt chambers hold out.'[26]

Children too had to cope with air raids for many had not been evacuated or were in reception areas which were not immune from bombing. In September 1940 many schools were closed in order for some form of protection to be provided. At Chipping Ongar Council School children sheltered in the corridor during alerts, there being no other place of safety, and sang songs. The next day only 16 children turned up and they were sent home after the all clear.[27] On the whole schoolteachers and pupils coped admirably. One head teacher noted that 'The worst air raid of the week came today (13th Sept.). It lasted from 9.30am until 2.10pm. Some of the elder children did weaving (by choice). Others acted classroom plays and the younger children read their story books and played games. Fortunately we were able to provide light refreshments – milk, biscuits and barley sugar.'[28] At East Hanningfield on the night of 5th-6th September, seven high explosive bombs fell within 150 yards of the school; unsurprisingly there were only 10 children present the next day.[29]

Just how successful was the Blitz? The first impact of intensive bombing shocked people to the core, especially in those areas of Metropolitan Essex which bore the brunt of it. As one commentator wrote 'it was more than bricks and mortar that collapsed in West Ham on the 7th and 8th of September 1940; it was a local ordering of society which was found hopelessly wanting, as weak and badly constructed as the single brick walls which fell down at the blast as though a gigantic Goering had literally laid his heavy hand upon them.'[30] This was partly due to the deficiencies already inherent in local society and government, and partly because no amount of planning could have coped with the catastrophe of that first raid. However, people recovered and adjusted to the Blitz. From Walthamstow Helena Britton wrote, 'Lots of people are leaving town…but I don't want to leave our little home if it's possible to stay…you mustn't worry about us, dear. We shall pull through.'[31]

The amount of destruction the *Luftwaffe* inflicted was significant but not catastrophic. By the end of 1941 6,297 buildings in Metropolitan Essex had been completely demolished, 80,347 were damaged but repairable, and 74,288 had been slightly damaged (Map 1). Many houses in the third category were only superficially damaged, suffering broken windows, doors and tiles.[32] Nevertheless thousands of Essex residents shared Jessie Grubb's experience when her house was damaged by the blast of a land mine. 'All our ceilings and most of the roof went. All of us safe…

The staircase had an avalanche of ceiling down it. I thought 'This is it!' Glass fragments right through curtains and hall picture and all in some butter I left on the kitchen table. All windows gone. A hole over Pat's bed. Good job she wasn't in it.'[33] Many public buildings and utilities had been damaged. By early 1941 four Essex churches had been completely destroyed, 19 seriously and 96 slightly damaged.[34] Eric Rudsdale visited the remains of Little Horkesley church near Colchester, which had been obliterated on 22nd September 1940. 'The church is a terrible complete wreck,' he wrote. 'There is no shape or form. It is just a vast pile of rubble, with beams and planks sticking out of it like a porcupine's quills….The scene is one of incredible destruction.'[35]

What of the human cost? Between 1st September 1940 and 11th May 1941 1,906 residents of Metropolitan Essex had died, 3,824 had been hospitalised with serious injuries, and 7,538 slightly injured. The rest of Essex was more fortunate with only 303 fatalities and 1,169 people injured.[36] However, these stark statistics hide the often horrifying reality of the Blitz. One woman from Walthamstow attempted to extricate a man trapped under rubble after a land mine had exploded but his arm came off in her hand.[37] In Extra-Metropolitan Essex alone there were direct hits on 40 Anderson shelters, which resulted in 115 deaths and 233 people injured. One landed on a shelter in the garden of a terraced house in Barking, blowing apart the bodies of the six family members inside. The torso of one of them landed of the roof of what had been their home. An arm was found with an engagement ring on it belonging to a girl who was due to have been married only a few days later. The rescue van had only one shroud so the body parts were placed inside potato sacks which came from a nearby greengrocer. A dustcart was used to transport the remains to the mortuary.[38] The personal tragedies are too many to relate as the bombs carried off the great and the humble. On 13th October the Mayor of Chelmsford, John Ockleford Thompson, his wife, son and grandchildren were killed when their house suffered a direct hit. He had been elected Mayor for a record eighth time only a few days earlier.[39] Margery Allingham recorded the profound impression this made on her. 'The complete finality and ruthless completeness of the tragedy brought most people to an abrupt halt,' she wrote. 'Life, wife, son, grandchildren, house, possessions, all gone as savagely as if a giant had trodden on them.'[40] The greatest disaster to befall Essex during the Blitz was in West Ham on 9th September. A large number of people were sheltering in South Hallsville School awaiting evacuation buses which never came. There was a direct hit and the building collapsed. The authorities claimed that 73 people had died, including many children, but local people were convinced there had been a cover-up and that nearer 200 had lost their lives, with over 100 bodies never recovered when the site was concreted over. Even small villages were not immune. Seven people were killed by a bomb at Takeley. Three schoolchildren from Lexden near Colchester, evacuated to Rushden in Northamptonshire, were killed when the school was hit.[41] One cannot help but be moved by the pathos of this simple entry made by the Vicar of St Peter's, Upton Cross: 'Funeral. One unidentified body killed September 1940, discovered in debris, Mortlock Road, E.16, June 13 1941.'[42] Nevertheless casualties were far lighter than anyone had expected. German tactics helped. After the first raids in which large numbers of aircraft were involved, during most of the Blitz it was attacks by small numbers throughout the night, which were much easier for the emergency services to deal with. It meant that raids went on longer but their impact was scattered over a wider area. Their indiscriminate raiding did result in greater casualties and damage in Metropolitan Essex because of its urban nature. However, in the rest of the county the largely rural landscape precluded successful bombing on the same scale. Here over 37,000 devices – high explosive bombs, incendiaries, oil bombs and parachute mines – were dropped, but over a quarter fell harmlessly on agricultural and waste land, and over 500 fell in rivers and the sea. Unexploded bombs were a persistent menace and nuisance with almost 700 needing to be dealt with by late November 1940 but the resulting traffic obstruction and homelessness were usually of a temporary nature.[43]

The Blitz inflicted terror, horror, death and destruction upon the people of Essex but on reflection one cannot help but admire the courage, endurance, resilience and stoicism displayed by them. The disruption to their daily lives was enormous; homelessness and the loss of all personal belongings affected many; the threat of death, injury and bereavement was a constant presence for nine long months. However, morale, that vital element of civilian society in modern warfare, survived in spite of the destruction and the casualties. In this the Blitz was a complete failure. It is difficult to generalise about the collective experience of this event but we may perhaps be presumptuous enough to suggest that part of this poem, written at the time by Margaret Fowler of Wickham Bishop, gets near to it:

> What have we seen in Essex?
> The wreck of houses small,
> The wreck of lovely churches,
> Danbury, Coggleshall;
> Dead cattle on the marshes,
> Deep craters by the lanes,
> And parachutists falling,
> And flaming aeroplanes.
> These have we seen,
> but still we go
> With heads erect
> and hearts aglow.[44]

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Acknowledgements

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the staffs of the Essex Record Office, Colchester Local Studies Library, Chelmsford Central Library, and Stratford Local Studies Centre for their unfailing cheerfulness, helpfulness and efficiency in my innumerable research visits

The Author

Paul Rusiecki was born and raised in Yorkshire and has lived in Colchester since 1978. He is a History graduate of the University of Sheffield, and completed a PhD at the University of Essex. Prior to his retirement he taught history at secondary schools in London, Suffolk and Colchester. His research interests are based in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and he is currently writing a book on the growth of football in Essex, and another on World War Two, provisionally entitled *Under Fire: Essex and the Second World War*.

Plate 2. An unknown location in East london but a scene of devastation that would have been a familiar sight for so many in those areas hit by bombs. ((HD-SN-99-02668 DOD/NARA) Photo of East End of London during the Blitz. WWII. Author: September 1940. New Times Paris Bureau Collection. (USIA))

Obituary

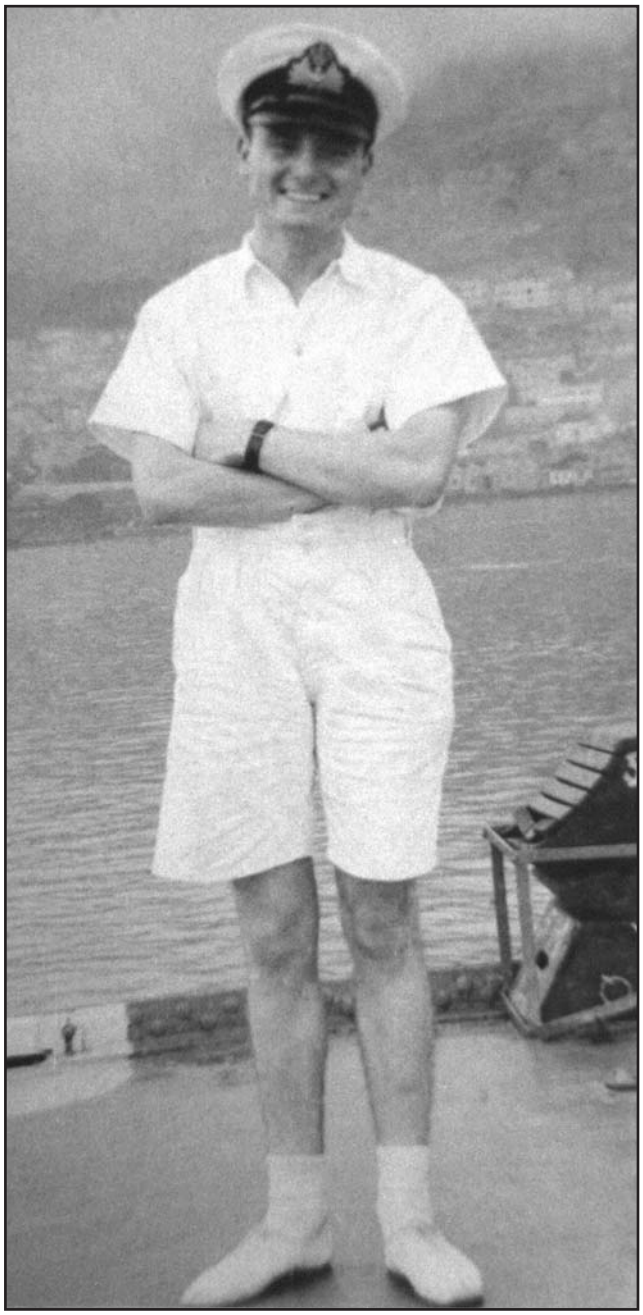
John Samuel Appleby (1925-2011)

John Samuel Appleby, who died on 30th August, 2011, was a man of many qualities who made a major contribution to historical work in Essex and to a range of good causes.

Born in Colchester on 29th March, 1925, to George and Florence Appleby, he was educated at Stockwell Infants, the Bluecoats School and Colchester Royal Grammar School. He was called up for service in the Royal Naval Voluntary Reserve in 1943 and rose to the rank of sub-lieutenant.

John served on many ships, his first was HMS *Wivern* escorting Arctic convoys to Russia before moving to HMS *Vivien*. These were both V & W class destroyers. During the D-Day landings he was on board a fast patrol boat involved in protecting troop ships crossing the Channel. His next posting was to an escort aircraft carrier, HMS *Nairana* participating again in both Atlantic and Arctic convoys. From these cool northern climes he was then posted to the Far East on classified operations in preparation for the invasion of Japanese-held Malaysia, which was never needed.

John, below, in *c.*1944 and, right, in 2010, (By courtesy of Roger Appleby.)



Following demobilisation, in 1947, he trained and then worked as a teacher in Essex schools and was appointed Headteacher at Gt Horkesley C of E Primary School in 1969, finally retiring in 1986. Outside his teaching duties, he ran a small printing business and became an Anglican lay reader, establishing a reputation as a preacher and pastoral worker in north-east Essex and at St Helena Hospice in Colchester.

He became honorary secretary of the V & W Destroyers Association, a branch secretary of the Russian Convoy Club and a member of the Burma Star Association. He was, in addition, made honorary chaplain to the Merchant Navy, Harwich, and to the Burma Star Association.

Fascinated by history from his earliest years, in 1947 John joined what became the Essex Society for Archaeology & History and served as its honorary secretary, President, Keeper of Manuscripts and a Trustee – holding the latter position until his death. He was also a stalwart of the Essex Congress and the Victoria County History of Essex Appeal Committee. In 1965 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. He played a key role in getting Philip Morant's 1748 History & Antiquities of Colchester republished in a facsimile edition in 1970, writing a new introduction to it and providing detailed biographical information on the author. John learnt Latin, Greek, French and Tamil, and dabbled in Urdu and Russian. He made a special study of Essex dialects and revised Edward Gepp's *An Essex Dialect Dictionary*.

John married Audrey Grace Fookes in 1947 and she assisted him in working for a variety of charitable causes, including the British Diabetic Association. Sadly, Audrey died in St Helena Hospice in 1993. They are, however, survived by four sons – Roger, Nigel, Andrew and David – and by six grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

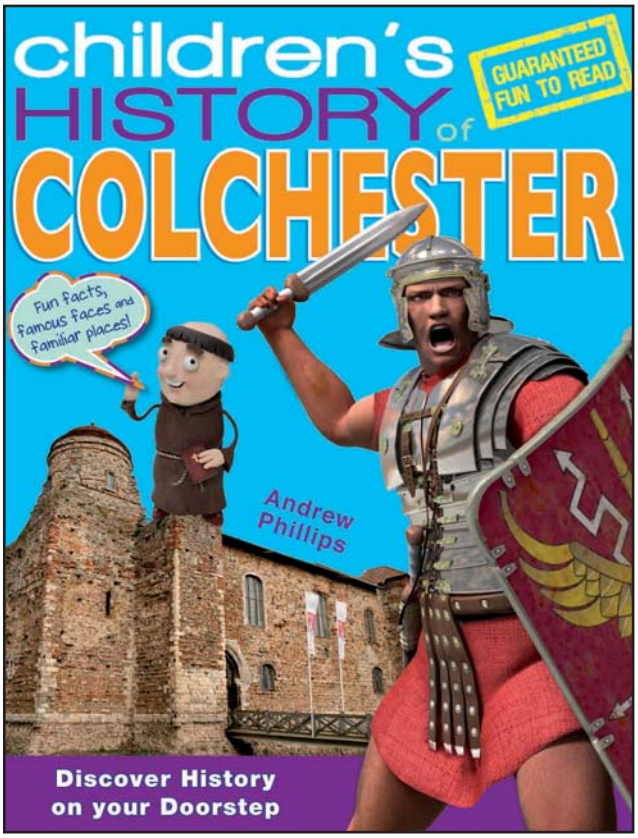
Stan Newens

Andrew Phillips,
Children's History Of Colchester,
pp.32. ISBN 978-1-84993-038-3.
Hometown World, 2011, £7.99.

For some time I had been meaning to organise a trip to Colchester to walk around the circuit of Roman walls, my son Thomas being at that age when all things Roman, knights, soldiers and Spitfires are very important. So it was a happy coincidence when Andrew Phillips mentioned to me that he had just completed his new book, a *Children's History of Colchester*, and that he had arranged a review copy for the *Essex Journal*. Colchester is also home to family friends, Michael and Sue Fox, so it seemed only sensible to meet up and 'road test' the book together. Michael, is also my regular Colchester book reviewer.

What I enjoyed was using the book as a focus for a delightful stroll and we were soon trying to answer many questions from Thomas, as well as ourselves. From the beginning the book reinforced just how pivotal Colchester has been in our history. The original focus for our walk was just the Roman walls, but the book inspired discussions about where the Civil War siege cannons were sited, what the most obvious ways to the river from the town would have been, the re-use of Roman material in later buildings and the perception of the Roman past by, say, the Saxon and Norman generations, to name but a few.

However, this excursion wasn't just a cerebral occasion - meeting up with friends and walking the walls had to have a break for food timetabled in. With our Roman theme, that really meant there was only one civilised place to take luncheon and



we were all pleased to stop at The Lemon Tree and dine in 'their' Roman 'cave'. Unfortunately we enjoyed our sojourn so much so that we were unable to manage a pint in the Hole In the Wall (planned because it is on the site of the Balkerne Gate). We did, however examine the Roman architecture in fullness, both intellectually and physically!

Andrew's book was consulted throughout our walk and it proved to be very useful. He has had a huge task to condense Colchester's 2000 years into 30 or so pages but it has been achieved in a very attractive and informative package. It is great to have a glossary and index – lets get children learning how to use a book properly. It's nicely produced and full of colour and it can be dropped without fear of any electronics being broken. The illustrations are thought provoking and we fielded many questions in relation to these from Thomas, although I'm not quite sure how successfully! So I recommend the book - a useful Christmas present perhaps for children or grandchildren. And if you buy it make the time to stroll around Colchester. We only managed the very obvious Roman wall remains but there is so much more and with the help of this book you will surely have a fine day out especially if it's in jolly company.

Neil Wiffen

Thomas writes:
This is a very intresting booc and it has sum verey intresting pichos. Iy riley luyc the tum lun bcase iv ben abol to sey wich pieryod am in [*sic*].

Book Reviews

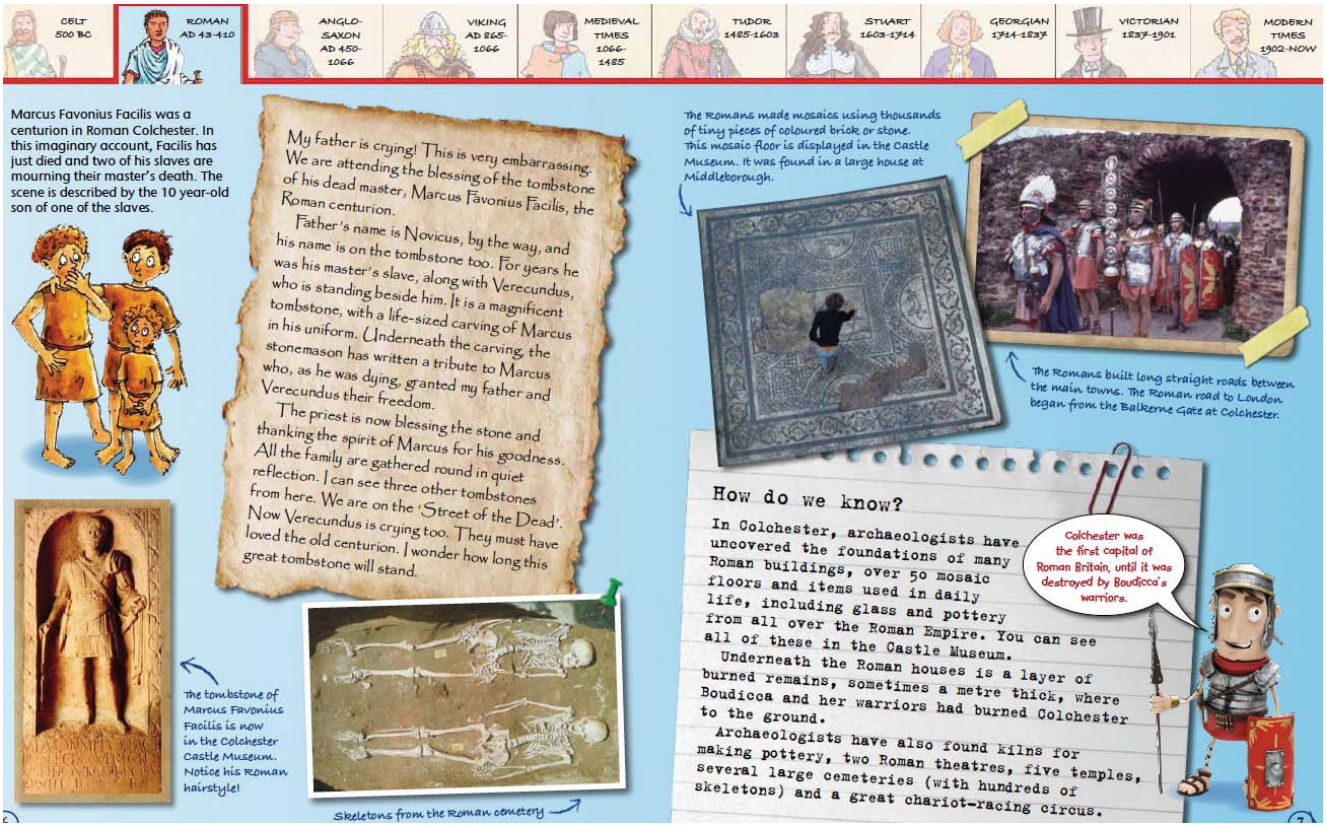
Colchester historian Andrew Phillips has authored this slim (32 page) but very accessible introduction to the town down the ages. If you are a fan of TVs *Horrible Histories* - which clearly many adults as well as children are - then you will be delighted by the same capacity to draw out key features of an age briefly but memorably. Here, as in the TV series, the visual impact drives home the words. Our road testing of the book, with six year old Thomas, found the time line ribbon at the top of each page (suitably illustrated - see below) a great aid to getting a clearer idea of what happened when. The use of manageable self-contained paragraphs about, say, what is the evidence for events in this era, rather than a continuous narrative makes engaging with the material when you have a short attention span much easier.

I suspect there are many adults whose historical knowledge is hazier than they are prepared to admit, will gain much by looking over their children's shoulder at this eye catching introduction to the town, its people, and their history.

Finally - it says something about how this town like so much of the country has changed when Hometown World - the producing company who are doing similar ventures for many towns across the land - have to print the book, not in any one of them, but in China!

Michael Fox

Below. Pages 6 & 7 showing the very helpful timeline running along the top of each spread. Opposite page, bottom left. Thomas consulting the book at the Balkerne Gate.



Adrian Corder Birch, **Our Ancestors were Brickmakers and Potters,**

pp.168. pp. ISBN 978-0-9567219-0-7, 2010.

Published by the author and available from him at:
Rustlings, Howe Drive, Halstead, Essex, CO9 2QL, £14.95 + £3 p&p.

Bricks and such like were made at Gestingthorpe in north Essex from the early sixteenth century until 1951. In the early nineteenth century John Corder (1806-1880), whose parents and grandparents had lived in the parish before him, became a brickmaker at one of the two village brickworks. He was the first of five generations of his family who, by 1942, had totted up some six hundred years of work in the industry.

Adrian Corder Birch, who is a great great grandson of John Corder, has produced a fascinating history of the family covering, in all, nine generations. John Corder, the first of the brickmakers, had five sons and a son-in-law who joined him in the industry, plus a first cousin, John Corder (1832-1907), who married another first cousin, Sarah Corder. Numerous grandsons and great grandsons in their turn – some at 10 or 11 years of age – also became brickmakers in the area.

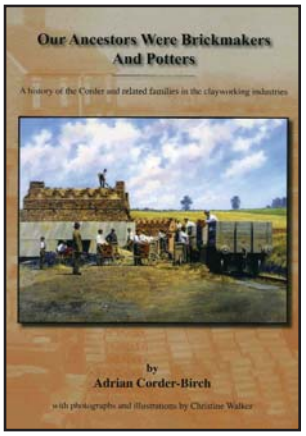
William Corder (1835-1903), second son of John Corder (1836-1880), bought South Green Brick, Tile & Pottery Works at Sible Hedingham and became a master brickmaker. His father, John, later became his partner and he also bought Potters Hall Brickworks at Great Yeldham and Park Hall Road Brickworks at Gosfield. The two latter brickworks were closed in 1908 and 1895 respectively, but William's son, Harry Corder (1873-1942), continued with the Sible Hedingham Brickworks until his death. It was then

sold by his brother, Fred, who had worked with him and brickmaking and the Corder family's close connection with it ended in this locality. However, another Corder scion, Raymond, born in 1966, was still working at the Bulmer Brick & Tile Works until 2008.

Edward Corder (1868-1940), another grandson of John Corder (1806-1880), moved to Thundersley to manage Manor Brickworks there, but later emigrated to Canada. Yet another grandson of John Corder (1806-1880), Henry Corder (1850-1934), worked alongside other Corder relatives for William Corder (1835-1903) as a pot and chimney pot maker. Other offshoots of the Corder family were brickmakers at Castle Hedingham Brick & Tile Works and there were links with the well known Bingham pottery in the same parish.

The author provides information on brickmaking families linked to the Corders: the Westrops, the Borehams, the Gepps and the Willetts at Castle and Sible Hedingham and the Finch, Felton and Rippendale families at Gestingthorpe. A branch of the Finch family migrated to Kingston-upon-Hull to work in the industry there.

This book is a pioneering study of a once important north Essex industry and provides a profile of the people connected with it and their social background. It is beautifully illustrated with photographs, family trees and maps and there is a glossary of brickmaking terms. The author, an expert on many aspects of the industry, is a member of the British Brick Society and the Brick Section of the British Archaeological Society in addition to his active involvement in Essex historical societies. He has produced a significant contribution to the family and industrial history of Essex which will be of permanent interest not only to the Corder clan and residents of Essex but also to those interested in industrial archaeology and social and economic history in Britain as a whole. Also, it is worth remembering that many of the houses built in north Essex, and further afield, in the period when the industry thrived, must have been constructed with bricks made by the Corders and their relatives, thus perpetuating their legacy.



Stan Newens.

Norman Jacobs, **Behind the Colonnade: thirty seven years at the British Museum,** pp.216. ISBN 978-0-75245-279-1, The History Press, 2010, £9.99.

Norman Jacobs lives in Essex and in this book he takes an affectionate look at his working life in the British Museum (BM) over nearly four decades. The museum he joined in 1967 was largely staffed by esoteric individuals who had been recruited in the 1920s and 1930s. His first job was working in the Reading Room admission office which was lined with oak cupboards containing registers of readers going back to the eighteenth century. The 'Banned Readers book' revealed the random and eccentric reasons for excluding a reader, ranging from 'imprisoned for conspiracy against the Czar of Russia' to 'strange behaviour in Kings Lynn' and 'suffragette'. Editing a staff newsletter, Jacobs published a veiled attack on a senior member of staff who was treating his juniors badly, and this led to his banishment to the old Patent Office in Chancery Lane. After a period of exile, he returned to 'Medieval and Later Antiquities' at the BM which (amongst much else) ran an identification service for objects brought in by members of the public. If an expert was not immediately available, objects could be left and collected later; some of these had been awaiting their owners' return since 1906. It was this department that Jacobs liked best, the elision of history with museum work.

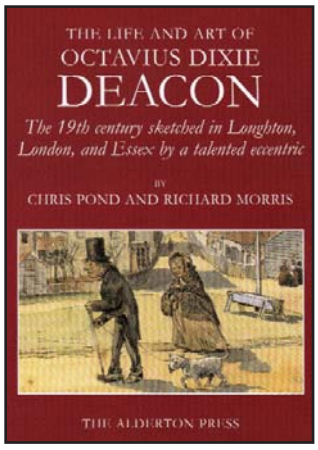
However this was soon to be disrupted by proposals by Ted Heath's government to introduce museum entry charges (a mistake that Margaret Thatcher attempted to repeat) as well as the subsequent pay freeze for staff. Jacobs was heavily involved in the trade union's opposition. Further significant changes were afoot with the separation of the British Library (BL) from the BM, with its attendant implications for staff pay and pensions. The minutiae of staff eccentricities are perhaps of more interest to fellow staff, past and present, but one of the strengths of this book is his description of his trade union negotiations, developing from shop floor level to senior administrator before his retirement. It should certainly be carefully read by anyone who thinks union activities are an obstructive anachronism rather than a right and proper guardian of working conditions of the ordinary employee.

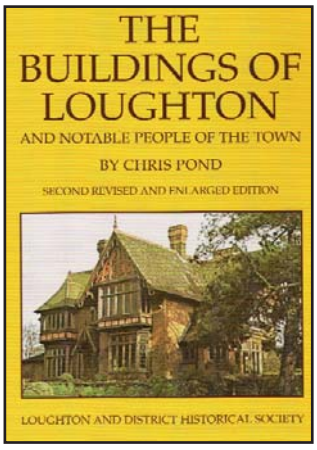
The other interesting aspect of this book is the account of how spending cuts reduced building maintenance to the point where, for example, buckets had to be placed in the department of Prints and Drawings each time it rained, and the resulting questions of whether the BM was a safe custodian of its national treasures. Ultimately this was resolved by sponsorship and a much more hard-nosed commercial approach, as well as the National Lottery for the triumphant creation of the Great Court which was developed after the BL moved to its new premises in Euston Road. There is much of interest in this lively and well-written book, as well as a pertinent message to those involved in the present round of spending cuts to the heritage sector.

Michael Leach

Book Reviews

Chris Pond and Richard Morris,
The Life and Art of Octavius Dixie Deacon,
pp.52. ISBN 978–1–90526–913–6
The Alderton Press, 2010, £7.50.
&
Chris Pond,
The Buildings of Loughton and notable people of the town,
pp.112. ISBN 978–1–90526-911–2
Loughton and District Historical Society, 2010, £7.50.
Both are available from: Dr. Chris Pond, Forest Villa, Staples Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 1HP. Email: Loughton_Ponds@hotmail.com





The Loughton & District Historical Society has a long pedigree for publishing well written and produced books on the area, many of which have been featured in these pages. We feature two more.

Over the decades many books have been written about the lives and works of well known artists such as Constable, Gainsborough and Turner. In recent years there has been a noticeable increase in the publication of books about lesser known but nevertheless talented artists. Essex is no exception with books about the lives and works of Morton Mathews, Eric Ravilious, Malcolm Root, Diana Sperling and others. To add to this increasing area of interest is this excellent publication by Chris Pond and Richard Morris. Deacon, an amateur artist, as well as an advertising agent and publisher, lived in Loughton for the last 40 years of his life until his death in 1916 at the age of 80.

The first 20 pages of the book are devoted to his life, family, their homes and the family firm of Samuel Deacon & Co, advertising agents, which was established by his father in 1812. It was still in existence one hundred years later under the management of Willoughby, a son of Octavius. Many of his letters written throughout his life about a variety of subjects survive and give an indication of his character, beliefs and eccentricity. One letter to the Rector makes interesting reading when it asks him to stay away from his home.

The final 24 pages contain colour illustrations of sketches and watercolours. These include views of Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell, Epping and many of Loughton. They capture not only buildings but also animals and people at work and play. Deacon undoubtedly had an interest in engines with illustrations of Darby Steam Diggers, a Steam Engine and Fenchurch Street Railway Station. There are helpful and informative captions with each illustration, many containing historic details from the local knowledge of the joint authors. The book also contains a good index and an invaluable family tree.

This reviewer particularly liked the variety and quality of the illustrations selected to show the diversity and talent of this previously little known Essex artist.

Following on from this, *The Buildings of Loughton and notable people of the town* is a second edition proving the popularity and success of the first, published in 2003. The author has taken the opportunity to include much additional information to enhance, improve and enlarge this latest edition.

The majority of the book is devoted to Loughton buildings, each with location, an architectural description, architect and builder where known, relevant dates and occupiers. It is not only the houses and churches of various denominations which are included but also other unusual features such as coal duty markers. Commercial and public buildings are listed as well as almshouses, war memorial, cemetery and a water fountain.

There is an alphabetical list of architects, cross referenced to the buildings in Loughton which they designed. Many of the entries contain additional information about the architects and the buildings with which they were associated not only in Loughton but also elsewhere. This is followed by a chapter about notable people of Loughton who mainly lived in the town during the period 1875-1925 and beyond. There are also photographs of five notable Loughtonians, one of whom is Octavius Deacon.

There are just over 30 other well chosen illustrations, with captions, in a central section, with a separate five pages of additional information about these illustrations. This is followed by a bibliography, references and two good indices. One index is for buildings and roads, which helpfully lists all relevant buildings within a particular road and the second index is of people including architects, patrons and organisations.

My only minor adverse comment is that the title and author's name does not appear on the spine, which would have made the book more recognisable on shelves. Apart from this it is an excellent book, which I thoroughly commend to you. I hope it creates a precedent and encourages other Essex towns to compile similar volumes about their buildings and notable residents.

Adrian Corder-Birch.

Book Reviews

Hazel Lake, Editor
A History of Mark Hall Manor,
pp.174. 978-0-95275-992-8.
Friends of Harlow Museum, 2010, £10.
Available £10 from Harlow Museum or from Hazel Lake, 50 Herons Wood, Harlow, CM20 1RW.

Hazel Lake has produced a number of historic studies on Harlow and people who have lived there. Now, with the help of the Friends of the Museum, she has produced a history of Mark Hall Manor and the closely associated Manor of Latton Hall. Together they comprise the pre-new town parish of Latton. Settlements on the land they occupy go back to pre-historic times.

Stanegrove Hall, in the north of the Manor, was successively the site of a Bronze Age pond barrow and an Iron Age, later a Roman temple. Nearly 1,000 ancient coins have been recovered from the site and the remains of a number of Roman buildings have been detected in the vicinity. The Saxons settled here subsequently, but the manors were confiscated and granted to Norman owners following the Norman conquest of 1066. In the twelth century Latton Priory was built in the south and lasted until the sixteenth century. Hazel Lake traces the ownership of both manors from the Domesday Book onwards.

In the sixteenth century they were purchased by the Altham family and remained with them until 1776. After comparatively short periods with an Altham cousin, William Lushington, and an improving landowner, Montague Burgoyne, the united manors were acquired by the Arkwright family – descendants of Richard Arkwright, inventor of the water frame and a textile factory magnate. They remained with them until after the Second World War. The land was then purchased by Harlow Development Corporation to form part of the site acquired for the development of Harlow New Town.

Mark Hall Manor House, or Mansion, was largely built by William Lushington in the latter part of the eighteenth century and it was not known how much, if any, of the pre-existing Tudor or Jacobean building was incorporated into it. Montague Burgoyne, the next owner, was against the slave trade and in favour of Parliamentary reform. In the later years of Arkwright ownership it was let to the Gilbey family of wines and spirits fame.

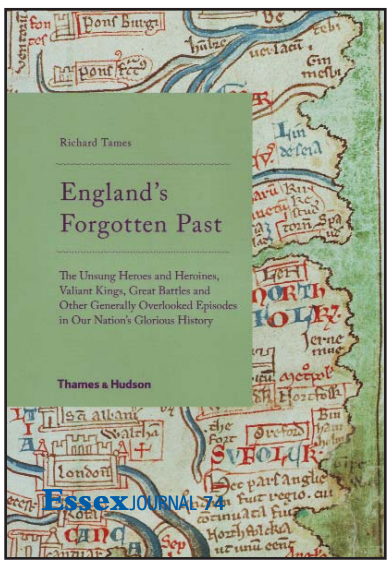
Hazel Lake's account of Mark Hall Manor is a significant contribution to the history of Harlow. The book contains numerous illustrations and family trees, a bibliography and a chronology which puts Mark Hall history side by side with national events dating back to prehistoric times. It tells a fascinating story which reflects the fact that Harlow is not just a new town but also a very old one.

Stan Newens

Richard Tames,
England's Forgotten Past,
pp.192. 978-0-500-51522-8,
Thames & Hudson, 2010, £12.95.

This book which describes itself as a 'Did you know?' book contains anecdotes ranging in time from the 'Ancient Britons' to the Second World War. It certainly contains some little jewels such as the suggestion that Alfred the Great had epilepsy or that the Marquis of Granby appears on pub signs bald-headed because he lost his wig in a cavalry charge at the Battle of Warburg.

It is divided up into eight sections including Lost Landscapes, Believe It or Not, and Yesterday's Celebrities. During the 1908 London Olympic Games the white-shorted American runners for the steeplechase were made to change into blue shorts before they were allowed to compete (for decency's sake at the water-jump). The tug-of-war was won by the British team (London Bobbies wearing boots), while the Americans had only soft-soled running shoes.



It is perhaps not generally known that the first documented camping holiday in the British Isles was when young gentlemen could no longer make the Grand Tour of Classical Europe because of the Napoleonic Wars. Instead, the writer and opium addict Thomas de Quincy started the camping fashion by touring Wales with a tent. The gymslip was the invention of a Swedish librarian who, engaged to train schoolteachers, believed children's physical health and fitness were the key to their well-being, and founded the basis for the science of physiotherapy. An unsung hero of the Crimean War (wholly over-shadowed by Florence Nightingale) was Alexis Soyer who reorganised the cooking for an entire division of the British Army, devising the 'field-stove' which was adopted for a century, and supervised the building of the model kitchens at Wellington Barracks.

The author being a lecturer to London Tour guides has lots of such anecdotes to relate, but it would have been helpful if their source was identified. Though many make fascinating reading, the reader is left with the feeling that it would be nice to know (or to be able to find out for himself) more. The book is probably therefore best categorised as one to dip in to and enjoy for what it is rather than a history book. It reminds me a bit of Sellar's and Yateman's *1066 and All That*, without the jokes. Aspiring Quiz Masters for private parties will love it.

James Kemble

EJ 20 Questions? Maureen Scollan

Maureen Scollan was born in Great Yeldham in 1944 before moving to Silver End. She attended Rainsford School in Chelmsford, then one of the few secondary modern schools to teach GCE O and A level courses. A geography project led her to the Essex Record Office for the first time, and guided and inspired by Hilda Grieve she acquired a lasting passion for historical research. A career as an assistant archivist and then as a police officer followed; she retired as an inspector. Maureen has published several books and articles, notably *Sworn to Serve: Police in Essex 1840-1993*. She has an MA from Birkbeck College, London, and a PhD from the Open University. She is Chairman of the Friends of Historic Essex and a Trustee of the Essex Police Museum.

(Photograph: M. Scollan)

1. What is your favourite historical period? One module of my MA degree used the works of Charles Dickens as the starting point for an insight into the Victorian period. Michael Slater, the tutor, rapidly converted me into a Dickens enthusiast.

2. Tell us what Essex means to you? A county of contrasts which is still under-estimated by the media and too many people from outside.

3. What historical mystery would you most like to know? The real identity of Jack the Ripper!

4. My favourite history book is... Hilda Grieve's *The Great Tide*, her monumental and well written history of the 1953 Essex floods.

5. What is your favourite place in Essex? It's a toss up between Maldon and Colchester.

6. How do you relax? Listening to radio plays (the pictures are better!) and classic detective stories; also walking my two dogs.

7. What are you researching at the moment? My Lancashire family history having recently met an unknown first cousin.

8. My earliest memory is... Supporting the sack containing the family's cat while my mother, baby brother and I waited for a bus when we were moving to Silver End, my father having gone ahead with the removal van. I would have been between 3 and 4.

9. What is your favourite song/piece of music and why? Gabriel Faure's *Requiem* which I fell for at a concert in the Temple Church in London; I almost floated home afterwards!

10. If you could travel back in time which event would you change? All women would have had the vote much earlier than 1928 if I'd been in power!

11. Which four people from the past would you invite to dinner? Admiral John McHardy, first Chief Constable of Essex between 1840-81; Charles Gray Round; Emmeline Pankhurst; and Lilian Wyles (1885-1975), one of the first Metropolitan women police officers.

12. What is your favourite food? While I am not vegetarian I do enjoy the tasty foods that contain neither meat or fish.

13. The history book I am currently reading is... I usually have several on the go. Currently they are Vic Gray's *Bookmen London*; John Belchem's *Irish, Catholic and Scouse 1800-1939*; and Janet Cooper's *The Church Dedications and Saints' Cults of Medieval Essex*.

14. What is your favourite quote from history? 'The past is another country, they do things differently there' from L.P. Hartley's novel *The Go Between* (1953), it is a useful reminder for historians not to impose their own perceptions on source material.

15. Favourite historical film? *Ryan's Daughter* is enjoyable for its insights into Irish history and the beautiful area where it was filmed.

16. What is your favourite building in Essex? I grew up near Cressing Temple when it was still a working farm, and as my parents knew the farm manager my brother and I sometimes went round the estate long before the barns were so famous.

17. What past event would you like to have seen? Queen Victoria's coronation.

18. How would you like to be remembered? As someone who tried to be helpful.

19. Who inspires you to read or write or research history? The early ERO archivists Ken Newton, Nancy Briggs (later Edwards) and Hilda Grieve were hugely influential in my early historical education, as were Arthur Brown and Gladys Ward. Much more recently Clive Emsley encouraged and inspired me to produce a polished doctoral thesis on parish constables.

20. Most memorable historical date? Tricky one! January 1971 when the Open University took its first 2500 students. It has changed for the better the lives of many thousands since - including mine.

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