

Essex JOURNAL

A REVIEW OF LOCAL HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

Autumn 2016

James Bettley discusses
the 'great progress'
of Chelmsford

EJ 20 Questions:
Robert C. Anderson



Lost Landscapes: Reconstructing Medieval Essex

Medieval Essex was a land of rich variety, including estuaries and marshland, coastline and rivers, royal forests and ancient countryside. The landscape around us can seem like a fixed and permanent thing but it is, in fact, ever-changing, shaped by both natural and human forces. This event will bring together expert speakers to explore how the landscape of medieval Essex shaped the lives of the people who lived there, and how they in turn shaped the environment around them. For further details please see www.essexrecordoffice.co.uk/events

Saturday 18 March 2017, 10.30am-3.30pm

Essex Record Office, Wharf Road, Chelmsford, CM2 6YT

Tickets: £20 including refreshments and lunch, please book in advance on **033301 32500**

In partnership with the Essex Place Names Project and the Essex Society for Archaeology and History

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I'm sure that many of you will be aware of the winding-up of Essex Congress and the absorption of its functions by the Essex Society for Archaeology and History (ESAH). This also includes the ownership of the titles *Essex Review* and *Essex Journal (EJ)* but, as Adrian Corder-Birch outlines opposite, this will not affect the running of this publication. In fact I think that it strengthens the future of *EJ* and is to be welcomed. Being part of a well-respected countywide organisation, established in 1852, can only be a good thing. While we the Editorial Board will carry on operating independently for now, none of us will go on forever and at such a time as we need to re-think how we operate, ESAH will be to hand. I look forward to working with ESAH in the future but for the time being, business as usual.

One of the functions that ESAH undertakes is that of advocacy and recently letters have been written to local MPs and authorities for a number of reasons. As local government funding continues to be reduced and non-statutory services quietly wound down, ESAH is able to highlight this and to take an active campaigning stance to bring such moves to a wider audience. This comes at an interesting time. While we shake ourselves off from the post-Brexit vote, we find that we have a new Prime Minister. Theresa May has said some interesting words since she came to office, not least in her closing speech at the recent Conservative Party Conference: 'the state exists to provide what individual people, communities and market cannot...tax is the price we pay for living in a civilised society...the Conservative Party are the party of public servants [among others]. We believe in investing in and supporting the institutions that make our country great'. This has to be encouraging given the recent reduction in national and local government spending, but then words are cheap. I hope that eye-watering reductions in spending on museums, libraries and archives will now be limited and that the notion of 'public service' is actually celebrated as a good thing and not a drain on the public purse. The current fad of 'commissioning' services by local authorities just seems to have introduced a new layer of management while reducing spending on front-line services. Holding the politicians and accountants to account is a most wonderful function that ESAH can perform.

And so to this issue. We kick-off with an update on Essex Congress, before Hannah Salisbury tells us what has been going on at the Essex Record Office while Andrew Phillips looks at the Hervey Benham Charitable Trust.

The first article is by Southend historian Ken Crowe. Ken has been working hard in the archives for many years on tracing the early history of Southend and here he shares with us the fruits of his research to date. I wonder what those early inhabitants would now think if they were to see the thriving town that now occupies their fields and plots and shoreline?

Robert Anderson, (Bob), looks at the Essex years of Thomas Hooker before his departure to New England. Bob has been researching migrants to New England for many years and this article is just his latest on the subject. Bob gave a lecture at Chelmsford Cathedral in May this year on Hooker and



this is the result of having written up his notes. I drove Bob around Broomfield and Great Waltham, just before he gave his lecture, so that he could familiarise himself with the locations associated with Hooker. It was a valuable exercise for me also as it made me look at the landscape and churches afresh. It's so easy to take for granted our countryside and historic buildings – taking the time to 'look' at them was very rewarding. Bob also finishes this issue with his responses to the EJ20 Questions piece.

James Bettley rounds off the articles with a consideration of the post-war redevelopment of Chelmsford town centre. This came out of the ERO event *The Changing Face of Chelmsford*, which I have assisted Hannah Salisbury with for the past few years. It generally turns into a bit of a therapy session for Chelmsford residents of a certain age – those who remember Tindal Street. I was looking for a way to celebrate the 50th volume of *EJ* and thought that an article on development of High Chelmer would be a good thing and who better to ask than James. It turned out that we were both busy and weren't able to get the article in volume 50 but here it is. It's been an absolute pleasure working with James and I thank him on behalf of us all for making time in his busy schedule to research and write this article. It makes fascinating reading and I'm so glad it is printed. I've never been able to walk along Tindal Street without imagining what it might be like if the Spotted Dog et al were still there. Even knowing that there are russet facing bricks on High Chelmer will not make up for what was lost, and don't get me started on the loss of the Corn Exchange!

We then have an obituary for William Wild before a selection of book reviews and that's another issue done. I hope you will find something of interest and I thank you all for your continued support of *EJ*. There's lot of material on hand for 2017 but before I start work on that I might do the following (after Lord Petre's cue – see *EJ*, 43, I, p.31): 'Sometimes I sits and thinks and sometimes I just sits!'

Cheerio,

Neil

Essex Archaeological and Historical Congress

I am sorry to report that the final Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Essex Archaeological and Historical Congress (Congress) was held on 25th June when it was resolved to dissolve Congress following over 50 years active and useful service to its many institutional members in the historic county of Essex.

It was felt that recent advances in computer technology had superseded some of the work and services provided by Congress and reductions in local authority support had also impacted on membership. There was some duplication of services provided by Congress and the Essex Society for Archaeology and History (ESAH) so it seemed logical for the two organisations to merge.

At the meeting Martin Stuchfield was elected as the new chairman of Congress and has supervised the necessary formalities required to dissolve it. The other officers were re-elected namely

Stephen Pewsey (President)
Norman Jacobs (Secretary)
Frank Turvey (Treasurer)
Andrew Madeley (Assistant Secretary)
Bill Pateman (Independent Examiner)

These officers served until the dissolution process was completed on 20th September when Congress was formally removed from the Central Register of Charities.

The constitution of Congress provided that upon winding up, all assets 'shall be given or transferred to a charitable organisation or charitable organisations having similar objects'. In accordance with the decision taken at the AGM all assets were transferred to the Essex Society for Archaeology and History. The first two thousand pounds will be paid over to *Essex Journal* and thereafter the

balance will be divided into three equal shares and paid to The Friends of Historic Essex and the Victoria County History of Essex Trust with the final third to be retained by ESAH.

ESAH will absorb Congress and continue its good work namely the provision of the *Panel of Speakers*, and arrangements for Archaeological and Local History Symposia. It has also been agreed to accept ownership of the titles of *Essex Journal* and *Essex Review*. However, *Essex Journal* will continue to remain completely independent with its own officers and accounts.

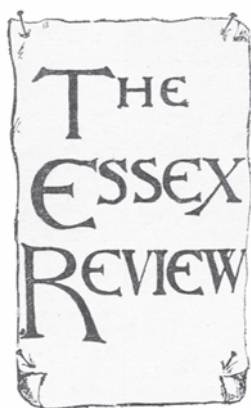
I, as President of ESAH, will be writing to all institutional members of Congress inviting them to join the Society. There will be two levels of subscription for institutional members, which will be payable from 1st January 2017. These will be £25 per annum for those who require a copy of the annual *Transactions* and £10 per annum for other institutional members not requiring the *Transactions*.

Finally, I should like to thank Martin Stuchfield for all his hard work in connection with arrangements for the Congress AGM and its subsequent winding-up. The Editorial Board of *Essex Journal* is most grateful to those who attended the Congress AGM and who made the generous decision to contribute £2,000 towards *Essex Journal*. These funds are much appreciated and will be put to good use. Notwithstanding the dissolution of Congress and transfer of ownership of titles, I should like to emphasise that *Essex Journal* will continue to operate as before. The Editorial Board looks forward to the continuing support of all its subscribers.

Adrian Corder-Birch
Chairman of the Editorial Board

EssexJOURNAL

Incorporating Essex Review



**The Essex Society
for Archaeology & History**

News from the Essex Record Office

As historians, we know that nothing stands still, and that nothing lasts forever. So it is at ERO, where we are experiencing change perhaps unprecedented in our 78-year history. In these difficult times for the public sector we are facing tough challenges, mostly in the shape of income targets. We shall do our best to continue to provide the service that we pride ourselves on. Any support, material or moral, will always be much appreciated.

Amongst the changes we are experiencing are some alterations to our staffing. The *Journal's* Hon. Editor, Neil Wiffen, has stepped back from being Public Service Team Manager to being an Archive Assistant. After 12 or so years ensuring the Searchroom was open and ready for business he is taking a breather to enable him to provide after school childcare for his children. In his place we have welcomed Amanda Hall as Essex Historical and Ancestral Research Services Manager. Amanda joins us from Essex Registration Services and is settling into her new role well, and we look forward to working with her in the future. Do make yourself known to her next time you're in the Searchroom.

We will shortly be saying goodbye to two of our archivists – Allyson Lewis, who has played a vital role in her 12 years at ERO, and Carol Walden, who has been with us on a maternity cover position and has been wonderful to work with. We will be welcoming back Ruth Costello from her maternity leave, and wish her well as she settles back in.

The You Are Hear project team have been busy installing listening benches and audio-visual (AV) kiosks in locations around the county. You can now visit permanent benches in Colchester, Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Kelvedon, Castle Hedingham, Great Waltham and Harwich. One of our touring benches is currently at Cudmore Grove Country Park, and the other is in Hatfield Forest. The AV kiosks are currently at Zinc Arts in Chipping Ongar and Fingrinhoe Wick Visitor Centre. Each of the benches and kiosks is loaded with recordings from the Essex Sound and Video Archive that relate to their surrounding areas, so if

you see one do stop for a listen. You can find out more about the project and where to find the benches and kiosks at www.essexsounds.org.uk.

We have launched a new venture recently in the shape of our Neighbourhood Cinema, and are trialling film screenings in our lecture theatre. The next one will be the 2015 version of *Far From the Madding Crowd* at 10.30am on Tuesday 15th November, and tickets are £5 on the door. You can find out more on the ERO website or in our e-newsletters.

We are hoping to increase our interactions with schools, both primary and secondary. We have launched a new session in collaboration with the Essex Police Museum on *Crime Through Time and Punishment* in the Past for Key Stage 2 students, and are increasing our offer to secondary schools with workshops such as study skill sessions focusing on source work. One school to visit us recently was Hedingham School with a group of sixth formers who are just beginning their A Level research projects, and it was great to meet them and hear about the research questions they have chosen.

We continue to build on our relationship with the University of Essex by hosting internships for their students. In recent months three students have joined us for internships working on aspects of our art collection, and one who undertook a project on the history of selected properties on Colchester High Street. We will be publishing the results of her work on our blog over the coming months, and it will also help to inform our Colchester on the Map event on Tuesday 15th November.

Our next conference will be *Lost Landscapes: Reconstructing medieval Essex* on Saturday 18th March 2017, which will look at aspects of the medieval Essex landscape. You can find more information about this and our other events at: www.essexrecordoffice.co.uk/events.

We hope to see you at ERO soon,

Hannah Salisbury
Engagement and Events Manager



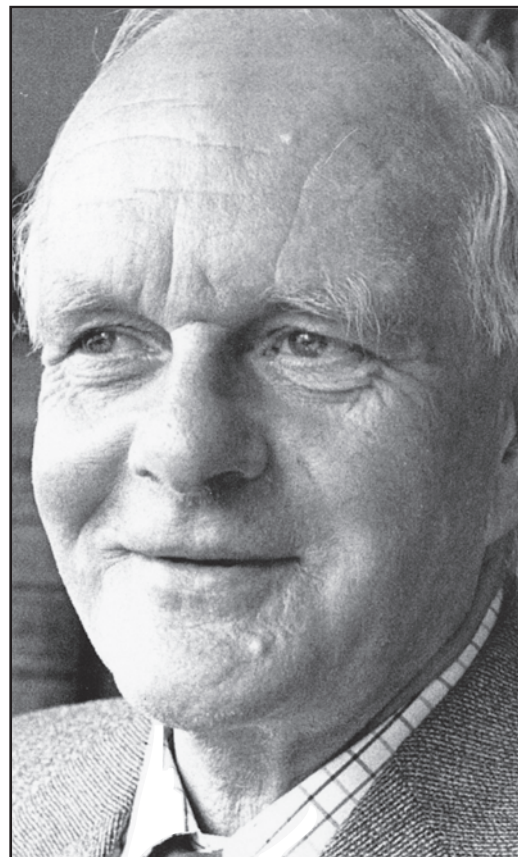
Hervey Benham Charitable Trust:

the living legacy

The *Essex Journal* recently received a grant from the Hervey Benham Charitable Trust to help with the indexing of the first 50 volumes. Hervey Benham (1910–87), the son of one of Colchester's most distinguished citizens, Alderman Sir Gurney Benham, lived his whole life in Colchester and on Mersea Island. One of nature's instinctive rebels, he inherited – reluctantly – the Colchester newspaper and printing empire which his father and uncle had run for over 60 years. He went on to steer and greatly enlarge that empire through what we can now view as the last golden age of newsprint, from the Second World War to the mid 1980s. As post-war austerity eased and government control of paper distribution ceased, Hervey built up and acquired a family of local papers: the *Braintree and Witham Times*, the *Maldon & Burnham Standard*, the *Essex Weekly News* and the *Halstead Gazette*, in addition to the *Essex County Standard* and *Colchester Gazette* which he had inherited. His presses became so busy that he eventually had to hive off the purely printing business.

His instinctive interest in machinery (he was an authority on wind and water mills) led him to invest in more advanced printing presses. He also began to share facilities with Arnold Quick, owner of the *East Essex Gazette*, (which covered Clacton, Walton and Frinton). They built new works Sheepen Road Colchester called QB, for Quick\Benham. While (in their view) the print unions held Fleet Street in thrall, Arnold and Hervey together explored best practice in Europe, honing in on the new technique of offset litho or web offset, as it later was called. This replaced the 'hot metal' of letterpress printing with photographic metal plates of far higher quality transferred by rollers to paper. Teaming up with the pioneering Leeds firm Hoe-Crabtree, they built at Sheepen Road, the first offset litho newspaper printing press in Europe, starting with the *Melody Maker's* 100,000 print run. This was in 1966, some 20 years before what is now called 'the Murdoch Revolution' at Wapping did the same thing for Fleet Street, generating thereby an industrial dispute longer, more brutal, and more far reaching than the miners' dispute had been.

Meanwhile Sheepen Road became a place of pilgrimage from all over the world, as QB undertook the printing of more newspaper titles than any other centre in Britain and Colchester's newspaper not only included colour photos, but a large weekly magazine supplement. Staff numbers rose from 80 to nearly 500. Finally, in 1970 Benham Newspapers launched the 'last daily local newspaper in Britain', the *Evening Gazette*, now known by its former title, the *Colchester Gazette*.



Sadly, this success story could not survive the harsh winds of de-industrialisation. Before he died, Hervey sold his business to one of the vast multinationals which now own most local newspapers.

Within his active business life Hervey Benham published 11 books about Essex, mostly maritime Essex, on which he was passionate as well as widely informed, and he was active in Colchester in many ways. He was a key founder of the Civic Society which did so much to spare Colchester the over development which threatened it in the 1960s and 1970s, and his was probably a decisive voice in establishing the Mercury Theatre in 1972. He was a keen musician, a lover of boats and a man of quiet but remarkable generosity. In his retirement he set up the Hervey Benham Trust (<http://herveybenhamtrust.org.uk>) which supports some aspects of Essex heritage. The Trust, for example, published posthumously Hervey's 12th and last book, his life and times, called *Life with the Locals* (a pun on local newspapers).

Andrew Phillips



The Origins and Early

History of Southend

by

Ken Crowe

Previous work of the early history of Southend has sought to identify the origins of the name and, to an extent, the location of the first settlement. The modern town of Southend occupies, and spreads beyond, the parish of Prittlewell in south-east Essex. Within the parish, by the mid-twelfth century, were the manors of Earls Hall and Priors (or Prittlewell Priory) together with Milton Hall and Chalkwell Hall. For the purposes of this investigation into the origins and early history of Southend, we will only need to consider the manors of Prittlewell Priory and Milton Hall (Fig.1).

Philip Benton¹ identified the most ancient part of Southend as lying in the south eastern extremity of Prittlewell parish, adjacent to Southchurch parish to the east, and with Porters farm and house to the north and west. John William Burrows² states that the term 'Southend' was originally used to denote the south end of Prittlewell parish and, following Benton, records the name being used in the so-called 'Ministers Accounts' of Henry VIII (1536, compiled at the Dissolution of the Priory). Benton and Burrows both record that in 1758 Southend comprised Thames Farm and 'Arthurs Land', named after its owner.³

In 1928 John Nichols published his translation of the 1309 Extent of Milton Hall; John, the son of Richard le Wise, one of the customary tenants, was required to take corn to Melneflete or to Strathende, the latter, Nichols suggested, being a landing stage on the coast, where the Corporation Jetty was, and thus the origins of Southend.⁴ P.H. Reaney brought together all the information available at

that time for the origins of the name; he repeated Nichols' opinion and also identified the earliest documented use of the name 'Southend', in the will of William Skott of Prittlewell, dated 1481.⁵ William Pollitt adds that, until the late eighteenth century, South End, in the vicinity of the Kursaal, was an agricultural district of a few scattered farmsteads.⁶

Subsequent authors have added very little to our knowledge of the origins or nature of the settlement. Statements that the early settlement comprised 'fishermen's huts and a jetty'⁷ and 'fishing smacks at the South End of Prittlewell'⁸ do not really help in characterizing the earliest settlement of Southend. John Smith, in 1991, tells us that the 'transition from a farmhouse (Thames Farm) and a few fishermen's huts into a hamlet' dates from the mid-eighteenth century.⁹ The present author attempted a reconstruction of the early 'Southend' in 2001, in *Essex Journal*, based largely on documentary evidence from the mid-sixteenth to the later seventeenth centuries.¹⁰

In this article the early settlement of Southend will be described, together with its economic bases, in rather more detail than has hitherto been attempted. The settlement will be traced from the later middle ages to the early eighteenth century and an attempt will also be made to put a little flesh on the bones of the people who owned, and to an extent lived in, the properties that made up the first 'South End.'

The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries

Unfortunately very few details relating to the earliest history

of the settlement that became known as 'Southend' by the end of the fifteenth century have survived. This must be attributed to the fact that the vast majority of manorial documents, for the manor of Prittlewell Priory, have been lost. As stated above, the first documented mention of a settlement is in the Extent of Milton Hall, or Mildentuna, in 1309, a manor belonging to Christ Church, Canterbury since before the Conquest.

Nichols' suggestion that the 'Strathende' of the Milton Extent refers to a landing stage at the end of a street is surely correct. The 1481 will of William Skott, referred to by Reaney describes the testator as living in a street called 'Sowthende' (*in vanella vocat[ur] Sowthende*¹¹). It is suggested here that the street referred to was later to be known as Southend Lane. And it will be shown later that the landing stage or wharf implied in 'Strathende' was still standing in the later seventeenth century.

The Sixteenth Century

The earliest extant listing of the properties that comprised 'Southend' is in the form of the rent roll that was compiled from court rolls and witness testimonies in 1536, for the Commissioners valuing the properties belonging to Prittlewell Priory at the time of that foundation's dissolution, and known as Ministers' Accounts.¹² This document lists the tenants, properties and the rents due to Prittlewell Priory in the manor together with the income from properties elsewhere belonging to the Priory. One of the principal tenants was Thomas Larkyn who held a tenement and 10 acres of land called Bakers, one acre of land called Hoggacre, 4 acres of land called Cocks

Croft, Little Cocks (5 acres) and 10 acres of land (unnamed) formerly held by John Cock the elder, in 'Sothende'. Larkyn also held a tenement called Pylattes in Southend. William Rede held a tenement and 6 acres of land called 'Merchis' (Marshes) in Southend. A property called Great Cocks (8 acres) was in the tenure of Thomas Spodyll while John Camper held Beres, 'lying in Southende' together with Laurence Porters, 'lying next Caters in Southende.'

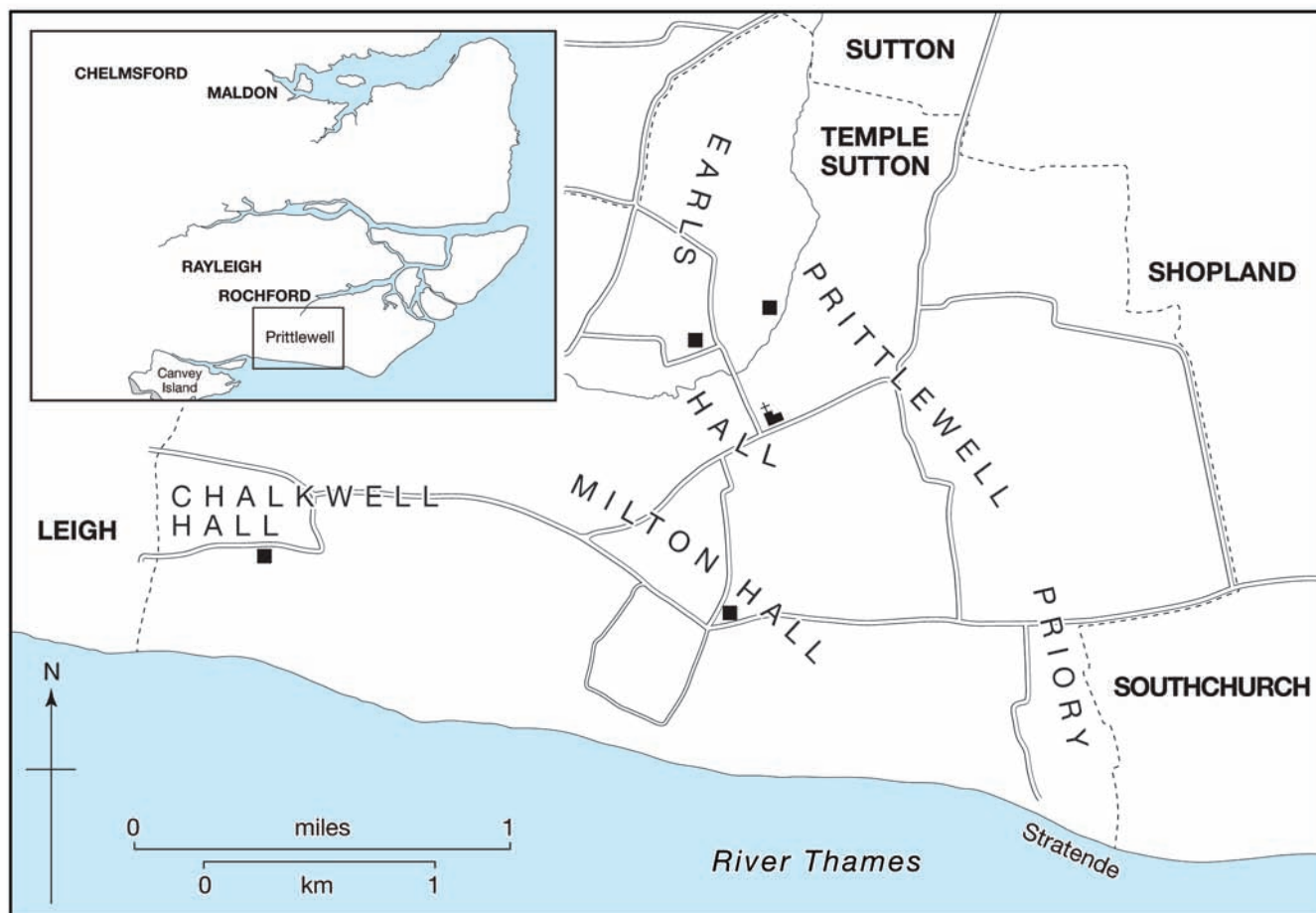
The organization of the Ministers' Accounts appears (perhaps fortuitously) to be arranged geographically, all the properties in the first section being in Southend (although not all described as such). Surviving manorial surveys and rentals from the later sixteenth century help to complete the map of early Southend, naming properties that do not appear in the 1536 Accounts, and placing them geographically, in relation to each other.¹³ Properties recorded (or known but not recorded as such)

comprising 'Southend' in the 1536 Accounts and in the later 1584 Manorial Survey occupied about one-sixth of the recorded area of the manor of Prittlewell Priory. Put in another way, of the 96 recorded properties (including tenements, marsh, land, etc) in the manor, 9 comprised 'Southend'.

It is important to mention the nature of land holding in the manor. Tenants of the manor held land either freely (that is, without being obliged to perform customary services) or by copyhold tenure, that is, in the terms usually expressed in the manorial documents, by copy of court roll. In Prittlewell, as in the east of England generally, copyhold tenants held their land by inheritance.¹⁴ This meant, in effect, that, as long as land changed hands through the manor court, a copyhold tenant (certainly in the post-medieval period) could sell or mortgage his property, just as if it were freehold. And copyhold tenants (by inheritance) were secure in

their tenure, being protected by manorial customs. Disputes (either between tenants or between a tenant and lord of the manor) were occasionally taken to Chancery, a fact that has resulted in a wealth of information concerning both land and tenants in 'Southend'.¹⁵

By the later sixteenth century, the date of the earliest surviving survey of the manor of Prittlewell Priory, there appears to have been a major change in the 'ownership' of the properties that made up the early 'Southend'. Apart from Beres (or Bears) which was freehold, Facons (later to become Thames Farm) and 'Marshes in Southend', the majority of the properties were by that date in the hands of Richard Cock 'of Prittlewell' (d.1612).¹⁶ The Cock family had been prominent in Prittlewell and south east Essex certainly since the late fifteenth century when a Thomas Cok (*sic*) of Prittlewell was one of the feoffees (or trustees) establishing a Guild in the parish.¹⁷ An earlier Richard



1. Medieval manors in the parish of Prittlewell. (This map and following C. D'Alton)

Cocke held the lease of the manor of Little Stambridge by the time of his death in 1570.¹⁸ The Cock family also held property in Milton Hall at this time.¹⁹ It seems likely (although records to confirm this have not been found) that Richard Cock purchased the Prittlewell properties (and Milton Hall properties) probably by the 1550s or 1560s.

Richard Cock retained his Prittlewell properties until his death in 1612,²⁰ together with the right (with Elizabeth Stock, who was tenant of 'Marshes in Southend') of 'commoning' his cattle on the Lord's common known as Shellingridge and upon the three adjoining marshes, at the yearly rent of 2s 8d.²¹ In his will Richard left his properties to his wife, Mary.²²

Seventeenth Century and the English Civil War

Richard Cock's three daughters, Anne, Catherine and Mary, were co-heirs to his Prittlewell estates. Mary (married to Richard Davies) died in September 1632.²³ Anne was executrix of her mother's will²⁴ and was still single in 1631, but soon thereafter married William Wakelyn of Bures in Suffolk. Catherine Cock had married Edmund Fisher 'of Southend', a barrister of the Inner Temple (although whether he practised as such is unknown); much more of him later. Suffice it to say at this stage that Catherine must have died either in 1631 or 1632, leaving her husband Edmund Fisher with six children – three boys and three girls, the eldest boy also being named Edmund. In 1632 Anne Cock and Edmund Fisher (presumably now heir in the right of his late wife) were jointly admitted at the manorial court to the property left by Richard Cock.²⁵ Anne was admitted to a 'moiety' (a half or portion) of the properties, Edmund to a third part.²⁶ It is unclear whether this was a real distinction; a moiety was normally a half, but it could mean simply a part. What is

important to note is that, at the end of the proceedings, Edmund Fisher, eldest son of this Edmund Fisher, was admitted by the lord of the manor to all of his father's lands, that is, a transfer of title from the father to the son.

In 1637 the court rolls recite the surrender of a portion (the moiety of Anne Cock, or moiety of a third part) to William Wakelyn and wife (that is, Anne Cock), 'with other remainders'.²⁷ William Wakelyn is then given licence by the lord of the manor to lease these properties for a period of seven years. This is not through the death of Anne, for we know that she survived her husband.²⁸ Perhaps by this means Anne transferred the title of the lands to her husband. Certainly Anne does not again appear in the surviving court roll records.

At this point it is worth saying something more about Edmund Fisher, father and son. Edmund senior was born in Fladbury, Worcestershire in about 1600 (relevant parish registers have not survived) and in 1617 he was admitted to the Inner Temple, probably then in his late teens.²⁹ Now a barrister, he must have moved to Prittlewell and married Catherine Cock by about 1620 (again relevant registers have not survived) for 'Edmund Fisher of Prittlewell' returned to his place of birth in 1623 with his wife and family 'for the recovery of his health'.³⁰ He was back in Prittlewell by 1631, when he served as Churchwarden, and signed the Vestry Minute book.³¹ The following year, as we have seen, he was admitted through the manorial courts to his late wife's share of her inheritance, to which his son was immediately admitted. Soon afterwards Edmund senior moved to Brentwood and married his second wife, Rebecca Warren on 11th March 1634.³² We hear no more of Edmund Fisher, father or son, for several years.

In the early part of the Civil War, Edmund Fisher senior, was a captain in the Parliamentary

forces, in Colonel Marten's Company. On the evening of 17th May, 1643 Fisher was apprehended, with another, who had 'come to Prittlewell [and] had taken away our horse & threatened to take more [and made] many insolent and threatening speeches, giving out that they had 150 men to come to them the next day'.³³ In this letter to Thomas Barrington, the senior Deputy Lieutenant in the county, Richard Everard notes that Fisher 'hath a sonne now with the King & is supposed to be a malignant himself'. It is interesting to note that Fisher and his accomplice were apprehended on the information of a 'Capt Freborn'; Samuel Freeborn was the Earl of Warwick's tenant at Prittlewell Priory, a staunch puritan and parliamentarian and certainly one of the 'better sort' in the parish. (Freeborn's name always appears at the top of the list of Vestry signatories and served as churchwarden or overseer for much of his adult life in Prittlewell.)

Henry Marten, a radical MP and staunch anti-royalist, had received a commission from Parliament to acquire horses for the Parliamentary forces, but the forcible seizure of horses from all and sundry was becoming a very serious matter.³⁴ Ordinances restricting horse seizures were passed in May 1643, and Everard, another of the County's deputy lieutenants, had to act on this blatant contravention of the recent ordinance against such actions. The two prisoners were taken to Chelmsford, but what happened after that is not known.

Everard notes that Fisher, while overtly a Parliamentarian, was a man whose loyalty could not be relied upon. Apart from having a son with the King, he 'is supposed to be a malignant himself, notwithstanding he hath a commission from my Lord of Essex' and that 'he hath entertained for his officers the chief malignants in Rochford Hundred.'

Preserved in the Prittlewell parish register³⁵ are a printed copy of the Vow and Covenant of 1643, and Solemn League and Covenant (1643–4), both with about 160 signatures, probably representing the heads of all the households in the parish. The first signature (after Thomas Peck, the minister) is that of Samuel Freeborne. Two names, however, were noted as missing from the list: Samuel Reniger and Edmund Fisher (the younger – his father was by now living in Brentwood).

Edmund Fisher junior was with the Royalist garrison at Oxford when that surrendered in 1646. His property had been sequestered, for which he now compounded (paid a fine) for its recovery. These properties are described as ‘A Messuage with the buildings thereunto belonging And certaine free and Coppyhold lands of Inheritance lying in Prittlewell...All which are in the possession of one Mrs Castleman’ together with ‘certain Marshlands in the p[ar]ishes of Canewdon and Wakering ... in the occupation of the said Mrs Castleman held by several leases from the Crowne and the hospital of St Bartholomew Smithfield for and during the Terme of 34 yeares yet to come.’³⁶ The fine he paid was quite modest, under the terms of the Articles of Oxford.³⁷

John Arthur and ‘Southend’

An entry in the court rolls for the manor of Prittlewell Priory, dated 4th June 1647 records the surrender (transfer through the court) from Hercules Arthur (of Bocking) and Jeremiah Whitaker, to John Arthur and his wife, of ‘One Capital Messuage or Tenement called by the name of Southend’ together with other lands ‘late in the possession of Peter Damion.’³⁸ This was followed, in the same court, by the grant of a licence to lease the property for a period of 21 years. No other details are given in this entry, and this is the first and only time that we hear of Hercules Arthur and Peter

Damion. Jeremiah (or Jeremy) Whitaker may have been the man of that name who was rector of Bermondsey in the early 1650s.³⁹ Hercules Arthur was the son of a clothier, who had purchased the manor of Fryers in Bocking in 1632.⁴⁰ He had been rated for Ship Money (1636) for Bocking⁴¹ and was the elder brother of John Arthur.⁴² However, it would appear from later evidence, that neither Hercules Arthur nor Peter Damion had any involvement at all in the transaction. Whether this was a genuine error on the part of the manorial steward (who was compiling this record 40 years later, as part of evidence for a case in Chancery) or some deliberate legal invention, is not clear. The latter may seem more likely, in the light of the subsequent dispute over the purchase.

Whatever the case may have been, it is clear that John Arthur (usually referred to as John Arthur, clerk), minister in Clapham, Surrey, purchased the property, but exactly from whom, and in precisely what circumstances, were the cause of a dispute brought before Chancery in 1656.⁴³ We have already seen that, in the late 1630s ‘Southend’ was in the joint possession of Edmund Fisher and William Wakelyn, by inheritance.⁴⁴ The surviving children of Edmund Fisher (the elder) contested the legality of the acquisition by John Arthur, claiming that their father had leased the property in trust for their benefit. In a rather complex and confusing case before Chancery the various Bills of Complaint and Answers provide some interesting details regarding the properties concerned and people involved.⁴⁵

Katherine and Mary Fisher (Edmund’s surviving children) claimed that, in 1642, their father had sold (i.e. mortgaged) the properties (‘Southend’ and Hudsons) to one William Langston of Henley (Hanley Castle, Worcestershire) for a 2,000-year term, in trust, for the

benefit of the surviving children.⁴⁶ Such long-term mortgages were simply a device by which the borrower retained possession, the lender only taking possession if the borrower defaulted on payments.⁴⁷ The properties were then apparently mortgaged to Elizabeth Castlemaine, widow, for £800 (Mrs Castlemaine is recorded as holding the property in 1646 – see above), but then redeemed being sold (fraudulently, it was claimed) by Edmund Fisher jointly to Jeremy Whittaker, clerk, and John Arthur, clerk, ‘part to one and part to the other, by virtue whereof they...entered upon the premises and received and took the rents and profits thereof.’⁴⁸ In fact John Arthur purchased ‘Southend’ and Hudsons for £750, while Jeremy Whittaker purchased Tylebarne (Wallasea Island in Canewdon) and other marshlands of the Fishers for £850. We shall not be concerned with this latter property any further.⁴⁹

The minutiae of the case need not concern us; suffice it to say that it centered around whether Whittaker and Arthur were aware of the existence of the original indenture or lease and its terms in favour of the Fisher children, but concealed it, as was claimed by the complainants. No further documents survived from this case so it is not known whether a final judgement was ever made. The case may have been settled out of court since John Arthur, and then his son, also John, retained ownership of ‘Southend’ and its associated properties into the later seventeenth century.

In the bill of Complaint it is argued that ‘the profession of the said John Arthur and Jeremy Whittaker are to teach justice and righteousness and to keep good conscience, but show little in themselves to your distressed Oratrices’. The important point for us is not whether John Arthur acted in ‘good conscience’ or not but that, for the first time, the properties making up ‘Southend’ were in the hands of an absentee landlord, who had no connection



2. Porters and Mr Arthur's Land, 'Southend' c.1670. (Reproduced by courtesy of Essex Record Office, D/DGs P5)

with the lands in question other than for commercial interest. John Arthur's acquisition of these properties was motivated in terms of building up what today would be called a property portfolio. In his will John Arthur of Clapham records freehold properties in Springfield, Boreham, Ulting, Langford (all in Essex), together with copyhold properties in Prittlewell, houses in Clapham and houses and lands in Braintree and Bocking and other freehold property in Prittlewell, Bocking, Great and Little Clacton and Little Holland.⁵⁰

John Arthur had entered Emanuel College, Cambridge in 1628, graduating with MA and then later instituted Rector of Clapham in May 1642. Described

as 'a very considerable man', and 'a man of some substance,' he was throughout his life a nonconformist.⁵¹ He was appointed, in 1654, one of the Assistant Commissioners (for Surrey) under the Ordinance for Ejecting Scandalous Ministers and in 1660, at the Restoration, was granted the award of Doctor of Divinity (Oxford), by Royal Warrant.⁵² He remained rector of Clapham, where he and his family were buried, until his death in 1663.⁵³

In 1651, before the case we have just been discussing came to court, John Arthur had mortgaged Hudsons Farm together with its associated arable lands, meadow, pasture and marshlands for £400 to Henry Colborn. Mortgaging property

was, at this time, a normal way for landowners to raise money; as stated previously, the borrower would retain possession of the property unless he defaulted on repayments, which was the claim being made in this case. A dispute over this transaction arose later around whether Arthur or his heirs ever paid back the money to Colborn, or his heirs, and was heard in Chancery in 1669, the defendants in this case being Dorothy Arthur, John's widow, and their son, also John.⁵⁴ Again, the complexities of the case need not concern us; what is of particular interest is that, in his evidence, Arthur Miles, the Complainant, describes in some detail the location of Hudsons Farm as 'lying on the right side

of the way...or street leading down to the sea'.⁵⁵ We are also told that Hudsons was 'in or near Southend' and so this places it on the west side of Southend Lane, between Porters and the north bank of the Thames.

The case was either found in favour of the defendants (Dorothy Arthur and her son, John) or settled out of court. If we now turn to the Survey of the Manor of Prittlewell Priory dated 1600 a property by the name of Caners (also known as Caters) and Sweets is described.⁵⁶ Belonging to Richard Cock, this property was situated to the south of Porters and with a road to the east. This property was perhaps renamed Hudsons, or formed part of the lands belonging to that farm.

By this period, if not some time before, almost all the properties comprising 'Southend' had been combined into one farm, with a single farmhouse, originally known as Facons, later to be known as Thames Farm, but at this time (1670) known simply as 'Southend.' Indeed, in the original dispute between John Arthur and the Fisher children, the former states in his evidence, that, following his purchase of the property, 'hee the Def[endan]t in or about the month of Nov[embe]r last past bought of the Compl[ainan]ts a parcel of books w[hi]ch were in the house called Southend'.⁵⁷ In 1662, 'Southend' (i.e. the farmhouse) was rated at 11 hearths, the largest number in the parish; the mean number of hearths in Prittlewell was 4.⁵⁸ John Arthur is given as occupier, suggesting that there was no tenant at that time.

Following John Arthur's death (1663) his son became 'landlord of Southend'. Among the surviving manorial records is a map drawn up about 1670, which shows 'Mr Arthur's Land' and Southend, with Hudson's Farm (although not named) lying below Porters (Fig.2).⁵⁹ The relations between the absentee Arthur, his sub-tenants and the Prittlewell community were not

always smooth, as an entry in the Vestry Minute book for Prittlewell under the year 1676 demonstrates. The parishioners had long been used to taking gravel from the foreshore (the beach) for mending the roads. In the spring of 1676, however, John Arthur instructed his tenant, Mr. Wright, 'to stop whatsoever carts ye said Surveyor for ye said parish shall send down thither to fetch gravel.' The parishioners got together at a Vestry meeting and instructed their parish Surveyors (of the Highways) 'Mr Richard Harris junr and Robert Wheeler to maintain by all lawful means ye privilege which we have formerly enjoyed and to fetch gravel from ye said common beach or shore as we have done time out of mind without molestation or hindrance.' The minute was signed by, among others, the Vicar, Samuel Phillimore and John Goodridge, tenant at Prittlewell Priory.⁶⁰

The later Seventeenth and early Eighteenth centuries

Although John Arthur (junior) was 'landlord of Southend', there was still one ancient property in 'Southend' that he did not hold – Marshes in Southend. This had been in the hands of the Cripps family since 1584, and was purchased by Edward Baber, citizen and dyer of London from Arthur Cripps and his wife in 1676, the transfer of title being recorded in the Court Baron for that year.⁶¹ Four years later Edward Baber purchased from John Arthur's widow, Anne, all of the latter's holdings in Southend and Little Holland.⁶² This completed the consolidation of all of the Southend properties into one holding. Baber's landholdings were even more extensive than John Arthur's, having property not only in Essex but also in Nottinghamshire and Kent.⁶³ He also bequeathed a total of over £3,000 in cash. The Essex estates – Prittlewell, Orsett, South Weald and Little Holland – he left to his eldest son, Thomas.

A dispute arose between Thomas Baber, Edward's son and heir, and the lord of the manor of Prittlewell, Daniel Scratton, which was taken to Chancery in 1688.⁶⁴ Edward Baber died in early December 1685 and his son was admitted to his lands in the manorial court held in May 1686. The details of the subsequent dispute illuminate very clearly several aspects of the relations between manorial tenants and their landlords in general, and several aspects central to the early history of Southend in particular.

Baber's complaints were, first that the entry fine he was made to pay was excessive, (at more than twice the annual rentable value of the lands), while Scratton claimed that the fine was 'always at the will of the lord'. Scratton also claimed that nine 'heriots' were due on the properties (which Baber denied), in the form of steers or cattle, to the value of £7 each. Scratton stated that he would take them from those that were being pastured on the lands in question, Baber responding that these were not his cattle but belonged to his tenants. In the end, it seems, that Scratton was persuaded not to take the cattle, and so raised the entry fine appropriately.

The second area of dispute concerned the court rolls; Baber claimed that he had been denied copies for each of the individual properties (17 in all) making up 'Southend'. (Such copies of court roll were the evidence given to the tenant on acquiring land, and upon which rights, as tenant, were based). Scratton said that it was the job of the Steward to issue copies of the court roll, the steward claiming that the lord of the manor kept the rolls himself, to which he, the steward, did not have access! A major element in the evidence brought to the court in this dispute was in the form of a book of 'Abstracts from Court Rolls' compiled in 1688, and which has been a principal source of information for the early history of Southend.⁶⁵

Another area of dispute concerned 20 acres of pasture that Baber claimed was part of his inheritance, but which Scratton claimed to be common land (and thus belonging to the lord of the manor). Scratton claimed that Baber, or his predecessors, or their tenants, had received money from 'several persons laying Tymber there'. This refers to 'the profits of a Wharfe or landing place remaining upon a Com[m]on called Sheldridge or Shildings Com[m]on' [i.e. Shellingridge] which profits, the lord of the manor claimed, should

come to him, the common belonging to the Lord of the Manor. Scratton claimed that Shellingridge Common was, in fact, the 20 acres of pasture in dispute.⁶⁶

This wharf or landing stage is surely to be identified with the landing stage at the end of lane or 'Stratende', and central to the economy of the early settlement (Fig.3).

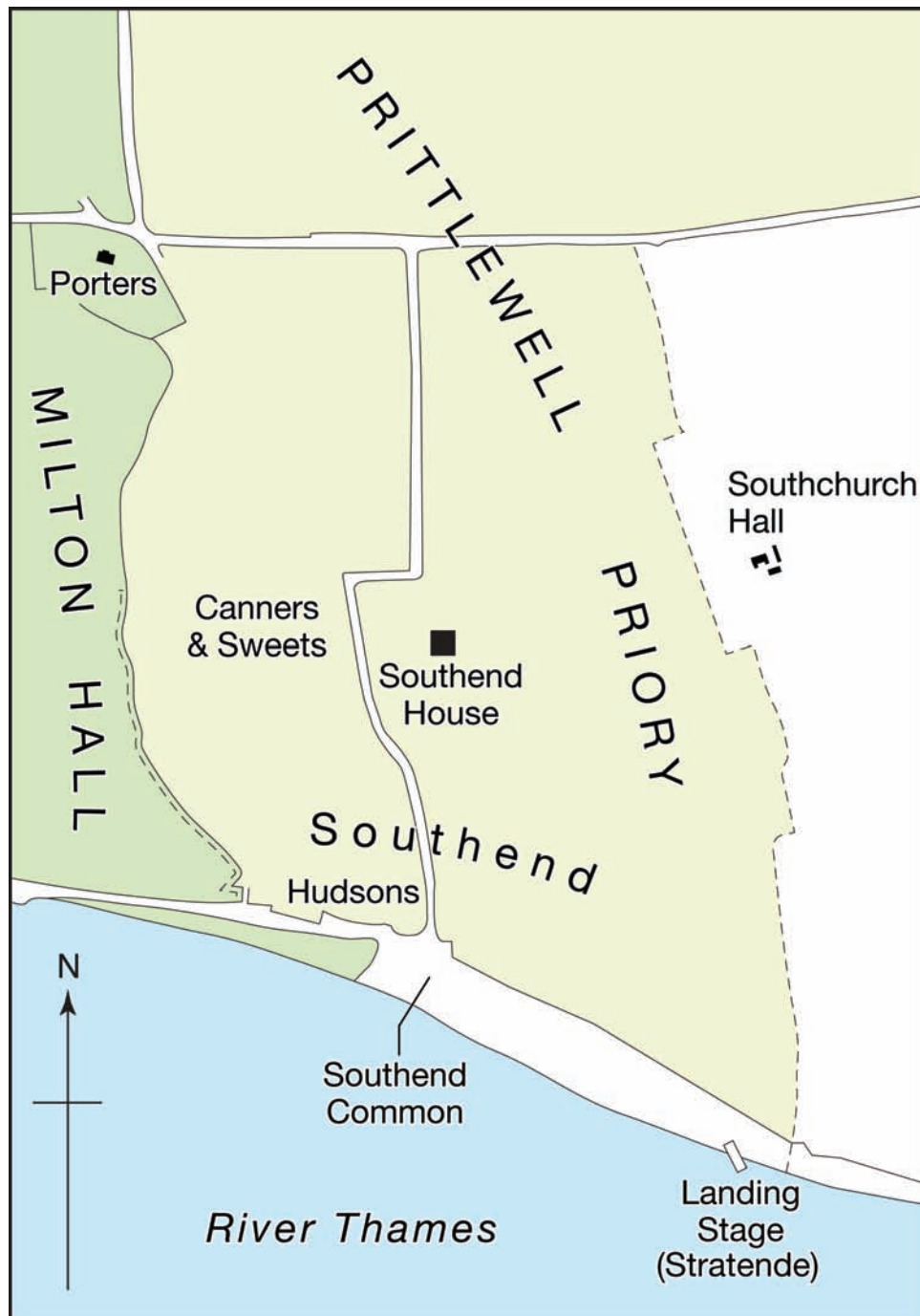
The Economy of Southend in the Early Modern Period

Since this is a narrowly-based survey, it would be inappropriate

to draw any wide-ranging conclusions. Far better to consider now, however, briefly, the economic basis of Southend in the early modern period, and attempt to put that, together with the foregoing survey, into a broader context.

Probably unsurprisingly the economy of Southend at this period was based on a mixture of farming and fishing. John Norden, in his 1594 description of Essex states that the 'hundreds of Rochforde, Denge...which lye of the sowth-easte parte of the shire, yelde milke, butter, and

3. Map showing the boundaries of 'Southend' in the late 17th century, and possible location of Stratende



cheese in admirable abundance: and in those partes are the great and huge cheese made'.⁶⁷ But not only sheep were grazed on the marshes and pastures of Southend. John Camper of Prittlewell bequeathed in his will sheep (which appear to be the most numerous of his animals), including 'lambys,' cattle, 'kyne' (probably milking cows), bullocks and pigs.⁶⁸ As mentioned earlier, Richard Cock and Elizabeth Stock, tenants of 'Southend' in the later sixteenth century, rented the lord's common for 'common-ing' (pasturing) their cattle.⁶⁹

When heriots were due the lord customarily took the best beast;⁷⁰ and as we have seen, in his dispute with Thomas Baber over entry fines (among other matters), Daniel Scratton, the Lord of the Manor, said that there was due to him 'nyne of the cattle then feeding and depasturing on the said Copyhold Lands'.⁷¹

In 1630, recorded as a 'dearth' year (although not one causing particularly severe famine),⁷² one John Kickson of Prittlewell was convicted of stealing two lambs belonging to Edmund Fisher, worth 5 shillings each. He was branded.⁷³ But the evidence suggests that probably most (if not all) of these tenant farmers were 'generalists,' growing crops as well as keeping animals.⁷⁴ John Camper, as well as bequeathing the best animals to his wife, mentions in his will wheat and barley malt. In his will of 1586 Henry Church 'of Southend' (holding the freehold property of Bears or Beards) mentions (as bequests) 'corn being in the barns or growing in any of my grounds' as well as his 'crayer' (a cargo vessel) named after his wife, 'Brigitt' and shares in other vessels.⁷⁵ Perhaps he loaded cargo on to his crayer at the landing stage or wharf on Shellingridge common? It is quite clear that it continued to be an important element in the economy of the settlement into the late seventeenth century when Daniel Scratton, the lord of the manor,

attempted the 'Recovery of the profits of a wharfe or landing place remaining upon a Com[m]on called Shildridge'.⁷⁶

Clement Cripps (of Southend) styled himself 'fisherman' in his will of 1611.⁷⁷ Along the foreshore of the Thames were placed a number of keddles or fish traps, held of the lord of the manor. Although none is recorded for Southend or Prittlewell (simply because the court rolls for the manor are lost), those recorded for the adjacent manor of Milton would be typical. Areas of the foreshore (ooze, ouze or oze) together with keddles were held just as copyhold properties on land, usually by inheritance through the manor court. Rowland Coitmore was admitted, in 1608, to four keddles upon the foreshore 'abutting upon Southend', and Lawrence Gilman had been admitted, in the same year, to an oyster laying, surrendered out of court to Elizabeth, his daughter and wife of Henry Church.⁷⁸ Another typical entry in the same source (for Milton Hall) dates from 1494-5; William Fyne the younger received from the lord of the manor a certain parcel of Milton Sands there to set up one keddle for the taking of fish...to hold to him and his heirs of the lord, at the will of the lord by the custom of the manor, at 12 pence annual rent.⁷⁹

So we can be fairly confident that many of the copyholders (and freeholders) of property in 'Southend' and Prittlewell, also held defined areas of the foreshore on which fish traps were set up and possibly oyster beds were established.

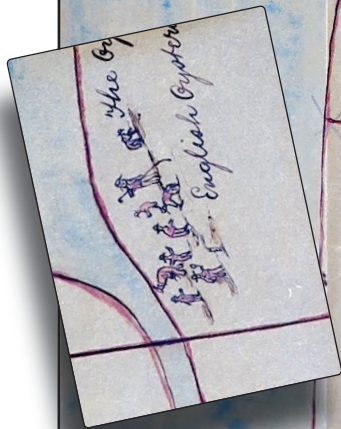
The Eighteenth Century

By 1690 Thomas Baber was the capital tenant of 'Southend', his under tenant being John Hust (d.1699), and then Samuel Malden.⁸⁰ From 1698 Andrew Coleman was paying rates for land and a house at 'Southend' and we find him capital tenant in the rental of 1716.⁸¹ Samuel Malden continued to occupy the

farm, as under tenant into the 1720s. His brother, John, was tenant at Prittlewell Priory and both served as parish officers, sometimes together, as in 1720, when both were churchwardens.⁸² In 1709 James Walton was rated for property in Southend (possibly the farmer at Thames Farm) and a Mrs Wailes was rated 'for her house' at Southend, Isaac Lamb paying rates 'for an oyster laying at Southend'.⁸³ However, it was not until the middle of the century that a significant change became noticeable.

In 1723 the Lord of the Manor of Southchurch Hall, George Asser, leased to James Outing of Poole in Dorset part of the foreshore, from Thorpe in the east 'unto South End and Prittlewell Priory in the Norwest for the laying of Oysters and gathering and Dredging of oysters and Brooding of Oysters there' (Fig.4).⁸⁴ In 1731 Richard Hull 'oyster picker at South End' was buried in Prittlewell churchyard and, in the same year William Warner, a dredger's apprentice, also died.⁸⁵

Southend farm (the original Facons, later Fanns and then Thames Farm) was passed by Charles Martin, grandson of Andrew Coleman, in 1743, to Henry Delaney Pigot.⁸⁶ By 1761 the farm had come into the possession of John Remnant of the City of London⁸⁷ and shortly afterwards a Mr Rennison was recorded as holding a farm, John Remnant being rated for a house, hopground and a Kiln.⁸⁸ It was certainly by this time, and probably some time before, that 'Southend' began to extend along the foreshore to the west of Southend Lane; Southend could no longer be equated solely with what by then was called Southend Farm. A large house, built by a Mr Hain by 1758, had been converted to the Ship Inn by 1764.⁸⁹ In 1767 John Remnant was granted 'All that piece or parcel of waste soil of the manor running to a point towards the east lying near and adjoining to the King's Highway leading from



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Prittlewell to Shoebury opposite to Southend Lane'.⁹⁰ In the same year he had erected a row of brick cottages, called Pleasant Row, probably near the site of Hudson's Farm.

In 1768 Mr Camper and others were rated for oyster layings, valued at the annual rent of £100. In the following year Southend was rated separately from Prittlewell for the first time, the settlement now having twelve houses.⁹¹ In 1770 the parish was taken to court regarding their rating of the oyster grounds (now rated at £200 annual rent), a case that was eventually determined in their favour at Quarter Sessions.⁹² The cultivation and fishing of oysters had become the principal economic driver in the development of Southend.

The settlement expanded along the shore so that, by the 1790s, there were 25 houses and cottages, and the Ship Inn. The early resort trade also saw growing competition between the coach companies as more visitors were being drawn from the capital.⁹³ While the economy of the settlement, at this date, continued to be principally based on farming, fishing and the growing barge trade, Daniel Scratton, the lord of the manors of Prittlewell Priory and Milton Hall, being aware of the growing popularity of sea bathing, was promoting the development of a 'New Town' to the west.⁹⁴ Thus begins a new chapter in the history of Southend.

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49. TNA, C6/130/72; Tylebarne, also called Derewishop, was in the hands of Richard Cock and then his widow, Mary, who then passed it, or the lease of the property, to her two daughters, Catherine Fisher and Anne Cock, eventually passing to Edmund Fisher. TNA, PROB 11/15/541. See Reaney, p.207, for the names of these properties.
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56. ERO, D/DSc M14.
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60. ERO, TS 10/2.
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70. Heriots were due to the lord of the manor on the death of a tenant; the heriot was normally in the form of the best animal.
71. TNA, C5/145/78.
72. K. Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (London, 1992), p. 463; K. Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (London, 1990), pp.143-6; P. Slack, *Poverty & Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1988), p.50.
73. ERO, T/A 418/107/40, Indictment of John Kickson of Prittlewell, 1630.
74. H.R. French, *The Middle Sort of People in Provincial England 1600-1750* (Oxford, 2007), p.52.
75. TNA, PROB 11/69/679, Will of Henry Church, 19/11/1586.
76. TNA, C5/449/44.
77. ERO D/ABW 11/17, Will of Clement Cripps, 17/02/1611/12; members of the same family were fishermen on Foulness (William) and at Gt Wakering, another William.
78. ERO, D/DS M4, Extracts from Court Rolls (Prittlewell Priory), 1705-45, to show the right of the lord to the shore or sea ground.
79. Ibid.
80. ERO, D/DSc M11, rental of the manor of Prittlewell Priory, 1690.
81. ERO, TS 10/3, transcript of Prittlewell overseers' rate book, 1697-1741; ERO, D/DSc M13, Rental, manor of Prittlewell Priory, 1716.
82. ERO, TS 10/2.
83. Ibid.
84. ERO, D/DMq E1/4, counter-part lease, Southchurch Manor, George Asser to James Outing, part of sea shore, 1725.
85. Prittlewell Parish Registers: J.H. Burrows, *St Mary's Church, Prittlewell, Registers of Burials, 1645-1812* (Southend, 1921).
86. ERO, D/DB T902, Deeds, Charles Martin of Prittlewell to H. Delaney; land in Southend.
87. ERO, D/DB 240, Deed, Abstract of Title of George Asplin regarding Thames Farm, 1743-1806.
88. ERO, D/P 183/12/1, Prittlewell parish overseers' accounts, 1757-1783. Benton, p.513, tells us that hops were cultivated on part of Thames Farm, and that the kiln was a lime kiln, situated on Shellingridge common.
89. Smith, p.3; Benton, p.513.
90. ERO, D/DB 240.
91. ERO, D/P 183/12/1.
92. Ibid.
93. Smith, p.5.
94. Ibid, pp.5-6; see also I. Yearsley, *Southend in 50 Buildings* (Stroud, 2016), pp.50-9.

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The Author

Ken Crowe retired from Southend Museums Service, where he was Curator of Human History, in 2014. Since that time he has devoted much time to one of his passions – local history, and particularly of the early modern period. He has also ventured into the more modern period, with published works on the history Southend's Kursaal and the history of the town in the First World War.

Thomas Hooker at Chelmsford,

Essex, 1625–1631

by

Robert Charles Anderson

Thomas Hooker was one of the most revered and influential Puritan ministers in England in the 1620s and in New England in the 1630s and 1640s. He spent six of his 60 years in Chelmsford, Essex, and many historians and genealogists have written about his years in that town. This article has two goals: to demonstrate that all prior Hooker biographers have misinterpreted several important pieces of evidence for this part of his life; and to present a new narrative of his time in Chelmsford. Research for this article has also unexpectedly uncovered information relating to the minister Rev John Eliot (1604–90), later known as the ‘apostle to the Indians’, which helps to clarify points in Hooker’s chronology.

Brief Biography of Thomas Hooker

Before narrowing our focus to Thomas Hooker’s time in Chelmsford, it is worth outlining his life, to provide context for our discussions.¹

Thomas Hooker was born about 1586 at Marefield in the parish of Tilton, Leicestershire, son of Thomas Hooker, a yeoman farmer. He probably attended grammar school at Market Bosworth. In 1604 he matriculated at Cambridge from Emmanuel College, taking his BA in 1608 and MA in 1611. In 1609 he was made a fellow of the college, and remained in that position until 1618.

After resigning his fellowship, Hooker preached at various places in Leicestershire in 1619, but by the end of that year he was residing at Esher, Surrey, under the patronage of Francis Drake, a leading resident of that parish. Drake appointed Hooker

rector at Esher, but Hooker was also a spiritual confidant to Drake’s wife Joan.

Joan Drake died early in 1625, but by 1624 Thomas Hooker was already looking for employment elsewhere, residing briefly at London. By 1625 he had taken up employment as town lecturer at Chelmsford, and would reside there and in that vicinity for the next six years, as will be explored in more detail below (Fig.1).

Under pressure from William Laud, Bishop of London, Hooker left England in early 1631, staying briefly at Amsterdam but then settling at Delft. By early 1633 he had decided to migrate, so he returned briefly to England, and then sailed for New England early in July on the *Griffin* and arrived at Boston, Massachusetts, in early September.

Thomas Hooker resided first at Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he was made pastor of the church there. In 1635 a number of Cambridge families began the settlement of Hartford, Connecticut, and Hooker followed them in 1636. He died at Hartford on 7th July 1647.

Thomas Hooker’s Chelmsford Years

In his grand survey of the history of religion in New England in the seventeenth century, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Cotton Mather included a biography of Thomas Hooker, ‘The Light of the Western Churches; or, the Life of Mr. Thomas Hooker.’² This contains much interesting material about Hooker’s time in Chelmsford and various extracts will be used and their value discussed below. However, while Mather’s biography remains one of our most important sources for the life of Thomas Hooker, great care must be taken before we accept Mather’s statements. He was writing in the last decade of the seventeenth century, six decades and more after the events he was describing, but he was in possession of documents now lost to us, and he knew personally some of the actors in these events, most importantly for our purposes Rev John Eliot. On the other hand, Mather was notoriously careless with the facts. As each extract from Mather is examined,

1. Extract from Saxton’s 1576 map of Essex showing the location of parishes around Chelmsford associated with Thomas Hooker. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office, MAP/CM/1/1)



we will be looking for other evidence, generated closer to the time of the events, which might support or conflict with Mather's story.

The Quiet Years

1624 was a transitional year for Thomas Hooker. He left Esher and resided briefly in London. On 27th January 1623/4, he was licensed to teach grammar throughout Diocese of London.³ In the autumn of 1624, he was chosen by one faction of Plymouth Colony Adventurers in London as an arbiter in a dispute over Rev John Lyford.⁴

Mather describes the circumstances of Hooker's arrival in Chelmsford:

'Accordingly, Chelmsford in Essex, a town of great concourse, wanting one to "break the bread of life" unto them, and hearing the fame of Mr. Hooker's powerful ministry, addressed him to become their lecturer; and he accepted their offer about the year 1626, becoming not only their lecturer, but also on the Lord's days an assistant unto one Mr. Mitchel, the incumbent of the place... Here his lecture was exceedingly frequented, and proportionably succeeded; and the light of his ministry shone through the whole county of Essex... And some of great quality among the rest, would often resort from far to his assembly; particularly the truly noble Earl of Warwick.'⁵

Hilda Grieve, in her history of Chelmsford, reported two wills that included bequests to Thomas Hooker. In his will of 26th August 1625, 'John Burles of Chelmsford maltster' bequeathed 20 shillings to 'Mr. Hooker preacher of God's word in Chelmsford.'⁶ Just over a month later, on 3rd October 1625, 'John Marshall of Chelmsford... woollendraper' bequeathed 40 shillings to 'Mr. Hooker by whose pains in the preaching of

the gospel I have received much spiritual comfort'⁷ (Figs. 2&3). Both of these wills indicate that by the late summer of 1625 Hooker had already strongly influenced the spiritual lives of at least two Chelmsford merchants, indicating that he had already been in town for some months. The first will explicitly states that Hooker was 'preacher of God's word in Chelmsford.' Thus, we can pinpoint Hooker's arrival in town more accurately than did Mather: Thomas Hooker had arrived in Chelmsford sometime in the first half of 1625 and was soon appointed town lecturer. Although Thomas Hooker was town lecturer by the summer of 1625, he apparently established a residence in the nearby parish of Great Baddow by the end of that year. On 5th January 1625/6, 'Anne the daughter of Thomas Hooker clericus and Susan his wife' was baptized at Great Baddow.⁸ On 23rd May 1626, 'Ann, daughter of Mr. Thomas Hoocker of Baddow, minister, & Susan his wife,' was buried at Chelmsford.⁹

In evidence to be presented below, we will see that Hooker and his family shuttled back and forth between Great Baddow and Chelmsford, but apparently considered Great Baddow to be their legal residence for the next few years. However, it is interesting that in the burial record for the daughter Ann, Thomas Hooker is said to be simply of 'Baddow.' In his biography of Hooker, George Williams interpreted this as being Little Baddow and also misdated the baptism of Ann and implied that it took place at Little Baddow, and has thus misled many later Hooker biographers.¹⁰ Given the baptism of Ann at Great Baddow, and the later evidence placing Hooker at Great Baddow during these years, the bare 'Baddow' of the Chelmsford record of Ann's burial must be read as Great Baddow.

The next passage from Mather is central to the story of Hooker's sojourn in Chelmsford and

vicinity and will be analyzed in stages:

'The conscientious non-conformity of Mr. Hooker to some rites of the church of England, then vigorously pressed, especially upon such able and useful ministers as were most likely to be laid aside by their scrupling of those rites, made it necessary for him to lay down his ministry in Chelmsford, when he had been about four years there employed in it. Hereupon, at the request of several eminent persons, he kept a school in his own hired house, having one Mr. John Eliot for his usher [assistant], at Little Baddow, not far from Chelmsford.'¹¹

Mather here sets forth a two-stage chronology. First, Thomas Hooker served as Chelmsford town lecturer for four years, which would be, based upon our conclusion that Hooker began that work in 1625, from 1625 to 1629. Then, sometime after 1629, he and John Eliot ran a grammar school in Little Baddow. Note that this passage is the only evidence placing the school run by Hooker and Eliot in Little Baddow, and that this evidence is not contemporaneous with the events described.

Church court records provide evidence for Thomas Hooker as schoolmaster at Great Baddow. On 6th March 1627/8, Master Hooker of 'Baddow Magna' was presented at the Consistory Court for the Diocese of London for

'continually teaching school in that parish not known to be licensed and dwelling in the said parish and never receiving the communion there. There appeared Mr. Windford and he exhibited his proxy on behalf of the said Thomas Hooker and he made himself a party, and he exhibited before the lord judge a license to teach a grammar school, granted at



2. In his will of 26th August 1625 (D/ABW 47/104, above), 'John Burles of Chelmsford maltster' bequeathed 20 shillings to 'Mr. Hooker preacher of God's word in Chelmsford.'
3. In his will of 3rd October 1625 (D/ABW 47/103, below), 'John Marshall of Chelmsford... woollendraper' bequeathed 40 shillings to 'Mr. Hooker by whose pains in the preaching of the gospel I have received much spiritual comfort.' (Both reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office)



another time under the seal of this court, and further the said Windford alleged that the said master Hooker had received the [eucharist?] in the said parish church of Chelmsford, where [illegible] he had received each month. Which licence the said judge from his certain knowledge acknowledged to be true, and he thereupon dismissed the said Hooker from all further observation of judgement in this matter.¹²

We learn first that Hooker had been running a grammar school at Great Baddow for some time before March 1628 and that Great Baddow had been his residence during that period, but that he chose to take communion in Chelmsford. This meshes nicely with the baptism of daughter Ann in early 1626 and burial of the same daughter in Chelmsford a few months later. The license produced at court was the one granted on 27th January 1623/4 covering the entire Diocese of London, issued prior to his arrival in Chelmsford.

Further church court records demonstrate that Hooker continued through the rest of 1628, and probably into 1629, as town lecturer at Chelmsford and schoolmaster at Great Baddow, shuttling between the two towns. The 1628 visitation of the diocese of London summarizes this concisely:

‘17 September 1628
Baddow Magna
Mr. Johannes Clarke
vicar M.A.
Mr. Hooker ludimagister
[schoolmaster]
Jacobus Marshall
ludimagister
Chelmsford cum Moulsham
Mr. Johannes Michelson
R[ector]
Mr. Hooker lecturer¹³
(Figs.4&5)

Then, on 26th December 1628, ‘Master Hooker’ of ‘Baddow

Magna’ was presented at the Consistory Court for ‘not receiving the communion in the said parish having an house there.’ The wife of Master Hooker was presented for ‘not receiving the communion and refusing to come to church to give thanks to God for her safe delivery after child birth’ and a servant of Master Hooker was presented for not receiving the communion.¹⁴

Putting this all together, Thomas Hooker resided at Great Baddow from late 1625 to late 1628 (and probably into 1629), ran a grammar school there during the same years, but was frequently in Chelmsford, where he was town lecturer, took communion and had later family events recorded in the parish register. (On 9th April 1628, ‘Sarah, daughter of Mr. Thomas Hoocker, minister, & Susan his wife,’ was baptized at Chelmsford.) Nothing indicates that Hooker owned or rented a dwelling in Chelmsford.

John Eliot as usher

Before moving on to the latter years of Hooker’s time in Chelmsford, we need to digress briefly to clarify the chronology of these events. Clarification of this comes through another passage from Mather, this time from his biography of John Eliot:

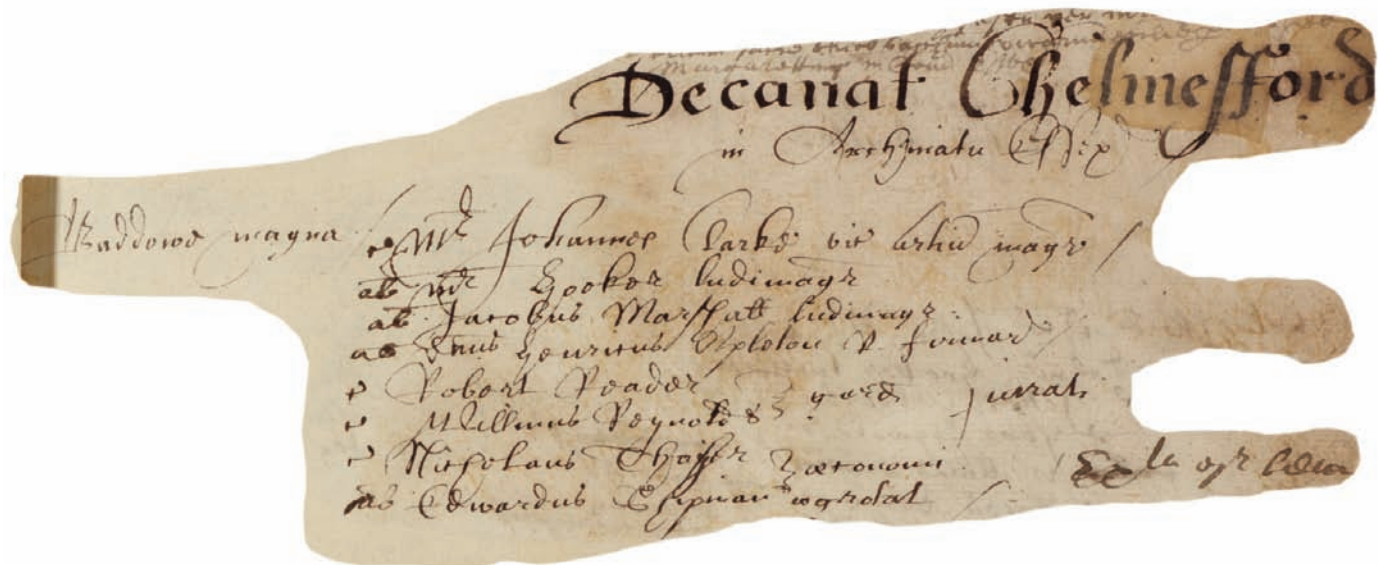
‘One of the principal instruments which the God of heaven used in tingeing and filling the mind of this chosen vessel [John Eliot] with good principles, was that venerable Thomas Hooker...it was an acquaintance with him that contributed more than a little to the accomplishment of His [Eliot’s] liberal education having now the addition of religion to direct it and improve it...His first appearance in the world, after his education in the university, was in the too difficult and unthankful, but very necessary employment of a schoolmaster [as Hooker’s ‘usher’], which

employment he discharged with a good felicity.¹⁵

Tom Webster, in his study of Puritanism in Essex in the early seventeenth century, while discussing the grammar school at Felsted, observed that ‘As elsewhere, the usher’s salary was used to fund the study of divinity students,’ that is, of young men continuing their studies after taking their first degree.¹⁶ The church court record of 17th September 1628 informs us that Thomas Hooker’s usher on that date was James Marshall. The only James Marshall who graduated from Cambridge or Oxford anywhere near this time was James Marshall, son of James of Horndon-on-the-Hill, Essex, who entered Pembroke College, Cambridge, in 1622, and took his BA in 1625–26.¹⁷ Hooker’s usher in 1628 would, then, have graduated from Cambridge just two years earlier.

We find that John Eliot, son of Bennett Eliot of Nazeing, Essex, entered Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1619, and received his BA in 1622. If we argue by analogy with James Marshall, then John Eliot, as a slightly older man, having received his BA four years earlier than Marshall, should have preceded Marshall as Hooker’s usher, as early as 1625 and no later than 1627. Mather’s characterization of this post as Eliot’s ‘first appearance in the world’ after attaining his BA supports this conclusion. If this is correct, then Eliot would have ended his term as usher before 1628 and moved on to some other community.

If we accept this argument, then Mather’s description of the grammar school run by Hooker and Eliot (as quoted above – ‘made it necessary for him to lay down his ministry in Chelmsford, when he had been about four years there employed in it. Hereupon, at the request of several eminent persons, he kept a school in his own hired house, having one Mr. John Eliot for his usher at Little Baddow’) must be



4 & 5. Extracts from the 1628 Bishop's Visitation of the Diocese of London, showing Thomas Hooker as simultaneously schoolmaster at Great Baddow (above) and lecturer at Chelmsford (below) on 17th September 1628. (Reproduced by courtesy of the London Metropolitan Archives and the Diocese of London, DL/B/A/002/MS09537/13, f.10)



wrong in two regards. First, we have argued above that Eliot acted as Hooker's usher before 1628, in a school that was in Great not Little Baddow. Secondly, Hooker's posts of town lecturer and schoolmaster were not sequential but concurrent, and as we have seen based on other evidence, the school was at Great Baddow. Mather presumably learned of the school from Eliot, so his confusion of Great and Little Baddow is puzzling, but no other evidence has been found which points to Little Baddow. As discussed above, inasmuch as *Magnalia* was published in 1702, 70 odd years after Hooker was in Essex, any of the word-of-mouth testimony might have been confused or

forgotten. Also Mather was Boston, Massachusetts, born and bred and would not have first hand knowledge of the finer aspects of the geography of Essex.

Turbulent Years

We now turn to the remaining two years of Hooker's sojourn in the Chelmsford area, from early 1629 to early 1631. William Laud was installed as Bishop of London in July 1628, replacing George Montaigne, who had not expended much energy pursuing Puritans who would not conform to the ceremonies and practices of the Church of England. Laud was an ardent antagonist of the Puritans, and soon began calling many of them before the ecclesiastical courts.

On 20th May 1629, Rev Samuel Collins, minister at Braintree, Essex, just a few miles north of Chelmsford, wrote to Dr Arthur Duck, commissary of the Diocese of London and one of Laud's principal assistants:

'Since my return from London I have spoken with Mr. Hooker but see small hope of prevailing with him. All the favor he desires is that my Lord of London will not bring him into the High Commission, but permit him quietly to depart out of his diocese.... If he be suspended by the High Commission, he will be out of all hope of employment elsewhere & in that regard it's the resolution

both of his friends & himself to settle his abode in Essex & maintenance is promised him in plentiful manner for the fruition of his private conference which hath already more impeached the peace of our church than his public preaching hath done. His genius will still haunt all the pulpits in the country where any of his scholars may be admitted to preach, which are for the most part men of bold & fiery spirits & dare vent those things which their master in public never durst.¹⁸

Collins is arguing that the greatest danger presented by Hooker is not his public sermonizing but his private instruction of younger ministers of the Puritan persuasion, who would eventually occupy pulpits elsewhere in Essex and throughout England. Duck's response to this letter is lost, but he must have replied almost immediately, as just two weeks later, on 3rd June 1629, Collins wrote to Duck again:

'I received your letter concerning Mr. Hooker the last Sunday and according to your directions on Monday I rode to Chelmsford to speak with him but found him gone into Leicestershire & from there purposed to return to London to appear before my Lord of London upon the first day of the term...I have signified to Mr. Hooker by a letter from Chelmsford...what good hopes I conceived of my Lord of London favor if he speedily & quietly according to his promise will depart out of the diocese.'¹⁹

Collins reports that by 3rd June 1629, Thomas Hooker had left Chelmsford and was in his home county of Leicestershire, perhaps for personal reasons, but also to continue his annual practice of returning to that county to deliver sermons at several churches.²⁰ From other sources we know that Hooker was

away from Chelmsford on other occasions in 1629. In late July, for instance, Thomas Hooker and Roger Williams rode north to Boston, Lincolnshire, where they joined with John Cotton in attending the conference at Sempringham regarding the plans of the Massachusetts Bay Company for removal to New England. Others present at that conference were John Winthrop, Isaac Johnson and Emanuel Downing.²¹ This trip alone would have consumed several weeks in the summer of 1629. On 26th August 1629, 'Sarah, daughter of Mr. Thomas Hooker, minister, & Susan his wife,' was buried at Chelmsford.²²

Events accelerated in November 1629. On 3rd November, John Browning, minister at Rawreth, Essex, wrote to Bishop Laud, complaining of Hooker's activities and requesting that he be punished. Within the next two weeks, two letters, one supporting and one opposing Hooker, had been circulating throughout the county, each gaining more than 20 signatures. Curiously, Samuel Collins subscribed to both of these letters.²³ Finally, on 10th November 1629, Laud suspended 'Thomas Hooker, clerk, Master of Arts, curate or lecturer or reader (as is said) of the parish church of Chelmsford' for refusing to subscribe to the three articles.²⁴

For the next year or so records for Thomas Hooker's activities in England are scarce. On 21st February 1629/30, 'Sara Hooker the daughter of Thomas Hooker and [blank] his wife' was baptized at Broomfield, adjacent to Chelmsford in the north²⁵ (Fig.6). For the year 1630, we turn again to Mather for an account of this period:

'The spiritual court sitting at Chelmsford, about the year 1630, had not only silenced Mr. Hooker, but also bound him over in a bond of fifty pound to appear before the high commission, which he could not now attend, because

of an ague then upon him. One of his hearers – namely, Mr. Nash, a very honest yeoman, that rented a great farm of the Earl of Warwick at Much-Waltham – was bound in that sum for his appearance; ...Mr. Hooker's friends advised him to forfeit his bonds, rather than to throw himself any further into the hands of his enemies. Wherefore, when the day for his appearance came, his honest surety being reimbursed by several good people in and near Chelmsford, sent in the forfeited sum into the court; and Mr. Hooker having, by the Earl of Warwick, a courteous and private recess provided for his family at a place called Old Park, for which I find the thanks of Dr. Hill afterwards publicly given in his dedication of Mr. Fenner's treatise about impenitency, he went over to Holland.'²⁶

Old Park was a farm in Great Waltham, owned by Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick, and leased out by him, at this time to Mr Nash. Thomas Hooker may have continued his subversive activities in Essex and elsewhere, or he may simply have sequestered himself at Old Park. Certainly his family resided there, and remained there after Hooker left for the Continent in 1631, as 'John son of Thomas Hooker and Susan his wife' was baptized at Great Waltham on 4th December 1631.²⁷

These two turbulent years ended for Thomas Hooker about June 1631, when he departed for Amsterdam and then Delft. For large portions of 1629 he was away from Essex and in 1630 he is virtually unrecorded. Given the pressures he was under from Bishop Laud, he would have had a difficult time conducting a grammar school at Little Baddow, or anywhere in the diocese, with or without John Eliot.



5. Broomfield Church, where on 21st February 1629/30, ‘Sara Hooker the daughter of Thomas Hooker and [blank] his wife’ was baptized. The author (right) standing next to the thirteenth century Purbeck marble font in the church. (N. Wiffen, 22/05/2016)



John Eliot, Thomas Hooker and the ‘church-within-a-church’

On 7th October 1657, Rev John Eliot, Hooker’s former usher, wrote to Rev Richard Baxter in England, describing some of his experiences in England prior to his migration to New England in 1631:

‘I have known before I came to New England in the Bishops’ times, a company of Christians who held frequent communion together, used the censure of admonition, yea and of excommunication, with much presence of Christ, only they had not officers, nor the sacraments; and notwithstanding this their liberty together, they held public parochial communion so far as avoided offence, and interested themselves in all good means for the public

good of the parish where they lived.’²⁸

This passage describes what modern scholars have termed a ‘church-within-a-church,’ in which the godly members of a parish met outside of formal church meetings, separate from other members of the congregation and in a setting just short of full separation. The group portrayed here by Eliot has been traditionally and uniformly interpreted to describe a ‘church-within-a-church’ led by Hooker in Chelmsford.²⁹ However, additional pieces of evidence, provided by Mather and Eliot, paint a different picture:

‘On [John Eliot’s] first arrival in New England [in 1631], he soon joined himself unto the church at Boston...Mr. Wilson, the pastor of that church, was gone back into

England...and in his absence, young Mr. Eliot was he that supplied his place. Upon the return of Mr. Wilson, that church was intending to have made Mr. Eliot his colleague and their teacher; but it was diverted. Mr. Eliot had engaged unto a select number of his pious and Christian friends in England that, if they should come into these parts before he should be in the pastoral care of any other people, he would give

himself to them, and be for their service. It happened that these friends transported themselves hither the year after him, and chose their habitation at the town which they called Roxbury. A church being now gathered at this place, he was in a little while ordained unto the teaching and ruling of that holy society.³⁰

The ‘pious and Christian friends’ who arrived in New England in 1632 and settled at Roxbury were from Nazeing, Essex, and vicinity, Nazeing being Eliot’s childhood home. Eliot notes the passing of some of these immigrants in the death notices he maintained as part of the Roxbury church records:

‘4 November 1644 John Grave, a godly brother of the church, he took a deep cold, which swelled his head with rheum & overcame his heart.

15 November 1644 Thomas Ruggles a godly brother, he died of a consumption. These two brake the knot first of *the Nazing Christians* [Author’s italics]. I mean they first died of all those Christians that came from that town in England.’³¹

The description of John Grave and Thomas Ruggles as being part of ‘the Nazing Christians’ suggests just the sort of arrangement described by Eliot, a group of men and women who recognized one another as being the godly, distinct from the majority of their fellow parishioners who were not so committed to their religion.

On this basis, and taking into account the conclusions reached above about Eliot’s time in Great Baddow, we may suggest a different interpretation of Eliot’s 1657 letter to Baxter, quoted above. After his tenure in 1626 or thereabouts as usher

at the Great Baddow school, Eliot returned to Nazeing, where he had resided as an adolescent, and where he still had family. While living there in the late 1620s, he joined with other families in Nazeing (and perhaps in neighboring parishes) and created a ‘church-within-a-church’. In 1632, a year after Eliot’s departure for New England, several of these ‘Nazeing Christians’ chose to follow him, and settled in the town of Roxbury, Massachusetts, where Eliot joined them as their pastor.

Even though John Eliot’s 1657 letter may not describe a ‘church-within-a-church’ headed by Thomas Hooker, several pieces of evidence indicate that Hooker did preside over such a group. We turn again to Cotton Mather for one document which points to this conclusion:

‘But having tarried in Holland long enough to see the state of religion in the churches there, he [Thomas Hooker] became satisfied that it was neither eligible for him to tarry in that country, nor convenient for his friends to be invited thither after him... Wherefore, about this time, understanding that many of his friends in Essex were upon the wing for a wilderness in America, where they hoped for an opportunity to enjoy and practice the pure worship of the Lord Jesus Christ in churches gathered according to his direction, he readily answered their invitation to accompany them in this undertaking.’³²

John Winthrop, Governor of Massachusetts Bay, writing in August 1632, provides us with another piece of the puzzle: ‘The Braintree company, which had begun to sit down at Mount Wollaston, by order of court, removed to Newtown. These were Mr. Hooker’s company.’³³ The ‘Braintree company’ were, not surprisingly, a group of

families from Braintree, Essex. They had boarded the *Lyon* in England on June 25th 1632 and arrived in New England on 16th September. (Winthrop had clearly misplaced the August item quoted above.) In the late summer of 1632, Mount Wollaston was an unoccupied location which would later be named Braintree, and Newtown was a new settlement which would soon be renamed Cambridge.

Among the families on the *Lyon* were John Talcott, William Goodwin, William Wadsworth and William Lewis.³⁴ At about the same time they boarded ship these men, along with Edward Coe and John Steele, all inhabitants of Braintree, Essex, were presented at the London diocesan court for failing to attend church in their home parish.³⁵ These four families, along with others on the *Lyon*, were among the first settlers at Cambridge, Massachusetts (where Hooker joined them in 1633), and followed Hooker a few years later when he moved to Hartford, Connecticut.³⁶

The appearance of six Braintree families at the same time in the church courts, accused of the same infraction, suggests that they constituted a ‘church-within-a-church’ there, and the circumstances described above indicate that they looked to Thomas Hooker as their leader. If this conclusion is correct, then we have some explanation for Rev Samuel Collins, minister of Braintree, writing two letters to Dr Duck; Collins, even though at times he leaned toward Puritanism, would have seen Hooker’s activities at Braintree as a challenge to his ministry.

Interestingly, nothing in the records suggests that Hooker led such a group in his own home parish of Chelmsford. There were certainly many migrants from Chelmsford to New England, and most of them would have heard and would

presumably have been influenced by Hooker's sermons, but none of them joined Hooker at Cambridge or Hartford, nor, unlike the 'Braintree company', did they form a cohesive group anywhere in New England. See list of migrants below.

Summary and Conclusions

Thomas Hooker was established as Chelmsford town lecturer by the summer of 1625. By the beginning of 1626 (and perhaps earlier) he was residing at Great Baddow, where he 'had a house', and remained there until at least late 1628. It was at Great Baddow that he ran a grammar school from 1625 to 1628, with John Eliot as his usher in about 1626 followed by James Marshall around 1628. Despite the placement by Mather of this school in Little Baddow, no contemporaneous evidence has been found in support of this claim. His influence was strong throughout Essex, but strongest at Braintree, where he encouraged, and perhaps participated directly in, a 'church-within-a-church', which later formed the nucleus of his congregations at Cambridge and Hartford in New England.

Appendices

1. Immigrants from Little Baddow

Despite the contention of this article that Thomas Hooker and John Eliot had no ascertainable connection with Little Baddow, that parish made a number of important contributions to the Great Migration to New England. At least four families which migrated to New England in the 1630s had resided at Little Baddow in the years just before they crossed the Atlantic.

William Vassall had a son born at Little Baddow in 1627 and a daughter in 1628. He came to New England in 1630, almost immediately returned to England, came to New England again in 1635, settled at Scituate, and went back to England in 1646.³⁷

Thomas Rawlins had sons baptized at Little Baddow in 1627 and 1629. He came to New England in 1630, settling first in Roxbury, then to Scituate in 1637 and to Boston in 1652.³⁸

Humphrey Turner had a daughter baptized at Little Baddow early in 1630. He had arrived in New England by 1632, settling briefly at Plymouth, then moving on to Scituate in 1633.³⁹

Thomas Buttolph was of Little Baddow in 1631 when he married Anne Harding at Boreham. They came to New England in 1635 and settled at Boston.⁴⁰

Note that the first three of these families had all moved to Scituate, Massachusetts, by the mid-1630s. None of these immigrants had any detectable connection with Thomas Hooker.

2. Immigrants from Chelmsford

As mentioned in the text, despite Hooker's years in Chelmsford he does not appear to have had led a Chelmsford 'church-within-a-church'. Around the time that Hooker crossed the Atlantic nine families from Chelmsford migrated to New England in the 1630s. Each entry in this list gives the name of the immigrant, year of migration and known residences in New England:

John Fuller, 1635, Ipswich

William Fuller, 1635, Ipswich, Hampton

Alexander Knight, 1636, Ipswich

Edward Porter, 1636, Roxbury, Boston

Valentine Prentice, 1631, Roxbury

John Rogers, 1636, Watertown, Dedham, Chelmsford

Thomas Sharp, 1630, Boston, returned to England

Francis Wainwright, 1637, Ipswich

Philip Watson Challis, 1636, Ipswich, Salisbury⁴¹

3. Cuckoos Farm - Pyncheon Connection

It has long been believed that Thomas Hooker had an association with Cuckoos Farm in Little Baddow, so much so that a blue plaque commemorates it. However, there appears to be no direct evidence of a Hooker connection.

In his will dated 25th April 1582, John Brett of Broomfield bequeathed to his wife Isabel for life and then to his son Thomas 'my tenement in Little Baddow called Cookucks'. The testator further declared that he had purchased this property from Mr. Baker and that it was in the occupation of Robert Sawyer. John Brett also bequeathed to son Thomas 'my tenement and lands called Phillowes' in Little Baddow. John Brett also owned two inns in Chelmsford, the Saracens Head and the Woolpack.⁴²

By 1590 John Brett's daughter Frances had married John Pynchon of Springfield, and they were parents by that date of William Pynchon.⁴³ William Pynchon sailed for New England in 1630, and was the most prominent settler of the new town of Roxbury, settled in that year. As such, he would have been one of the town leaders who welcomed Rev John Eliot as first minister of the Roxbury church in 1632. He could well have known Eliot during his brief sojourn in Chelmsford in the mid-1620s. In 1636 Pynchon and other Roxbury families moved west in Massachusetts Bay Colony to found the town of Springfield.

In his will of 15th January 1615/[6], Thomas Brett, son of John Brett, made no mention of 'Cookucks', but he did bequeath

to 'my cousin John Porter my tenement called 'Philles', with the land &c. in Little Baddowe, Essex'.⁴⁴ In 1620 a John Porter, possibly the same who received 'Phillowes', was paying rent on Cuckoo's Farm.⁴⁵ It is probably worthwhile undertaking further research on the ownership and occupation of Cuckoo's Farm in the 1620s.

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'The great progress of the place in modern times':

the Chelmsford Planning Survey and the High Chelmer development, 1945–73

by

James Bettley

When trying to imagine what Chelmsford was like 70 years ago, it is not very encouraging to read the opening lines of the town's official guide: 'The history of Chelmsford carries us back to the far distant period when history and superstition blend; most of her ancient buildings have, however, been demolished by the great progress of the place in modern times.'¹ Similar words were used in pre-war editions of the guide, since when enemy bombing had added to the destruction wrought by 'the great progress'. Chelmsford escaped relatively lightly in the Second World War, but the town was a target because of the important Crompton Parkinson, Hoffmann, and Marconi factories. The latter two were particularly badly hit; the heaviest raid was on 14th May 1943, when over 3,000 properties were damaged and 50 people killed.² To this must be added the general air of shabbiness that would have resulted from the lack of maintenance as a result of the shortage of manpower and building materials during the war and its aftermath.

A visitor to Chelmsford in 1944 characterised it as 'lacking in character and dignity; it had been developed in a haphazard fashion and had been severely handicapped by its particular problem of congestion.'³ This may not have been calculated to endear himself to his audience, the Chelmsford Rotary Club, but the speaker, Anthony Minoprio, had been commissioned by the Chelmsford Area Planning Group to direct a survey of the borough and rural district and make suggestions for improvements. 'The need for replanning in

Chelmsford is patent to all,' wrote the chairman of the Group, H.M. Cleminson, which had been formed in 1935 by local residents interested in planning matters.⁴ It made little impression until it organised the Planning Survey, funded principally by Hoffmann, Marconi, and Crompton Parkinson, but also by a number of other local businesses and private individuals.⁵

Surveys of this kind were an essential part of the process of post-war reconstruction, and several hundred plans and reports were produced, many of them commissioned from prominent architects and town planners such as Patrick Abercrombie, Thomas Sharp, Frederick Gibberd, and Edwin Lutyens.⁶ The first to be published was the County of London Plan, in 1942, and the process continued until 1947, when the Town and Country Planning Act required all local planning authorities to prepare surveys and plans for submission to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. The plans produced between 1942 and 1947 were responding to a variety of circumstances. In the case of London, there were long-standing problems of overcrowding that had been exacerbated by the loss of housing as a result of bombing. Cities such as Coventry, Bath and Exeter, and ports such as Hull, Plymouth and Portsmouth, had suffered particularly badly. Some historic cities like Norwich and York took the opportunity to tackle problems created by the increase in road traffic. Some plans were prepared for the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, created in 1943, but the majority were commissioned by local

authorities, following the lead of the London County Council in 1942. A handful, like Chelmsford's, were private ventures.⁷

Charles Anthony Minoprio (1900–88) was an architect and town planner, in partnership with Hugh Spencely in London; Spencely contributed to the Chelmsford survey, assisted by a third architect-planner, L.F. Richards. Minoprio and Spencely were simultaneously working on the town plan for Worcester, and went on to be the master planners for Crawley and Cwmbran New Towns, as well as producing plans for Baghdad, Dhaka, Kuwait and Chittagong.⁸ It was common at that time to combine the disciplines of architecture and town planning, and this had a significant effect upon the town plans, which placed as much emphasis on the importance of well-designed individual buildings as they did upon overall layout; one of Minoprio's recommendations for Chelmsford was that 'a fully qualified architect should be employed for the design of every building'.⁹ But although he deplored 'the generally low standard of architectural design which unfortunately prevails in Chelmsford', road traffic and congestion were at the heart of Minoprio's plan for improving the town. The centre had been bypassed by Princes Road, opened in 1932, but circulation in the centre was still poor; for example, although New London Road was able to take some of the traffic that would otherwise have used Moulsham Street as the main route to the centre, New London Road's traffic still had to join with the High Street or the



1. Aerial photograph looking north-east across Chelmsford towards the Cathedral, Shire Hall, Corn Exchange, Tindal Street and the High Street. Part of Bell Meadow can be seen at the bottom of the picture. (IEAW022951] Chelmsford, Market Day, 1949 © Historic England)

very narrow Tindal Street. That particular junction contributed more than its fair share to the 44 road accidents causing injury in the centre of Chelmsford in 1938. 'Narrow roads and bottlenecks, inadequate pavements, a lack of car parks and of service roads at the rear of shops, all add to the difficulties around the High Street.'¹⁰ The four-and-a-half-acre market site, between Market Road and the River Can, not only added to congestion on market days, but was in itself a wasteful use of land (Fig.1).

Minoprio was particularly exercised by the 'Tindal Street "island"', that is the island of buildings between Tindal Street and the High Street that had encroached upon the funnel-shaped medieval market place. This island was 'too narrow for well-planned modern shops', crowded with old buildings which were 'certainly not as useful as their central position demands'. Taken together,

'These defects are serious. They cannot be corrected by tinkering and by minor improvements which fail to remove the real cause of the trouble – the faulty design and lay-out of road buildings.

To solve all these problems satisfactorily in a single unified scheme, nothing less than bold replanning of Tindal Square and the whole central area between the High Street and the Recreation Ground is necessary'¹¹

– the Recreation Ground corresponding to that part of Central Park east of the railway line. In order to take through traffic away from the High Street and Duke Street, Minoprio proposed new 'riverside drives' along the Chelmer and Can; a new road on the west side of the town; altering the course of New London Road so that it no longer fed traffic into the High Street, but instead curved round to the west to join up with Market Road; and a new service

road between the High Street and the Chelmer. Roadways and pavements needed to be widened, and public car parks provided with a total capacity of 850 cars. Tindal Square should be replanned, as should the Tindal street area, 'in order to improve traffic circulation and provide the town with a convenient shopping centre'. The houses between Tindal Square and the Cathedral should be demolished, and a new Civic Centre built on the site of the market.¹²

Minoprio's plan, completed by May 1945, was displayed at the Shire Hall, the exhibition opened by Sir Patrick Abercrombie; it was visited by over 3,000 people and, we are told, 'aroused great interest'.¹³ Sir Patrick's speech at the opening was generally well received, although his mention in passing of proposals for new towns at Margaretting and Harlow, to accommodate 60,000 Londoners between them, 'evoked some criticism'.¹⁴ The plan was then published early in 1946 as a 63-page book, as well as being the subject of articles by Minoprio in the architectural press.¹⁵

It is hard to find adverse comment on the proposals made by Minoprio. The local press summarised the proposals rather than criticising them, although there was understandable doubt as to whether anything would actually come of them. 'What is going to happen to the Chelmsford Plan', asked the *Essex Chronicle*, 'once it is handed over as a gift to the authorities? There are no prizes for the nearest answer.'¹⁶ The Borough Council did at least agree with the Plan's view of the shape of Chelmsford to come.¹⁷

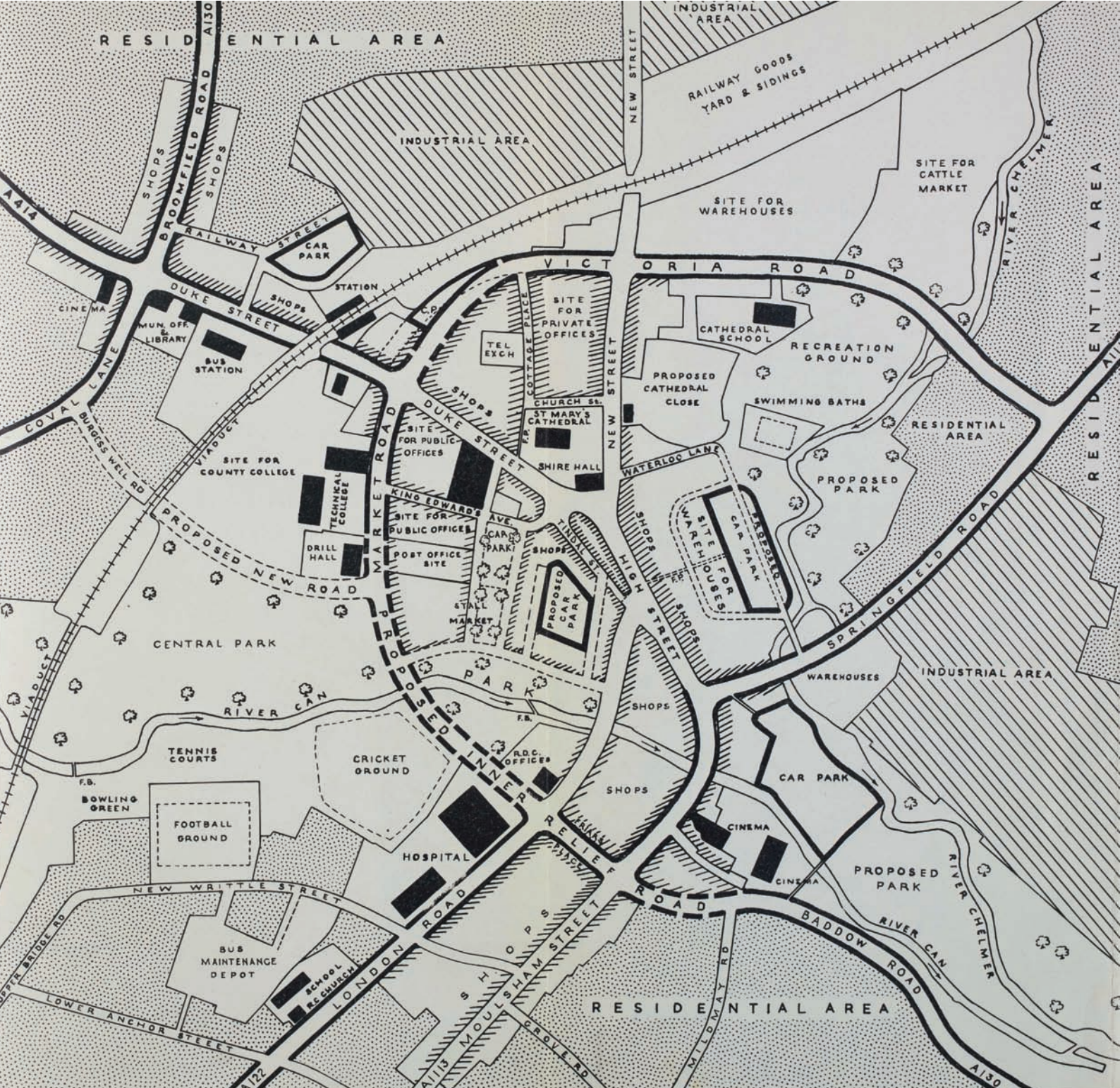
To the modern eye, what is most striking is the comprehensive, not to say ruthless nature of the proposed replanning of the town centre, with the High Street and New Street straightened out, Tindal Street and its 'island' obliterated, and Tindal Square reshaped as regular square. Broad boulevards take the

place of market-town streets, with public buildings laid out symmetrically in the manner of a planned city. The attitude towards the existing buildings is what now seems most shocking. Minoprio had little good to say about the town's buildings. 'In spite of its age, Chelmsford can hardly claim to be outstanding for the variety or quality of its architecture.' What good buildings there were – the Cathedral, the Shire Hall – could not be seen to best advantage because of their surroundings. Amongst the better buildings in the town, old and new, he identified the Saracen's Head, Springfield Mill, the Eastern National Bus Station, the Keene Memorial Homes, and Crompton's Social Hall. Part of the problem was 'that a large number of buildings...have obviously been built without the assistance of architects.'¹⁸

Minoprio's main shortcoming is that he was oblivious to the charm of relatively minor buildings that had developed haphazardly in response to very local needs rather than as part of a grand plan:

'The siting of buildings around Tindal Square is particularly unfortunate. Although the square is the centre of the County Town of Essex, it is entirely lacking in character and dignity. No attempt seems to have been made correct the unhappy effects of awkwardly placed and ill-shaped blocks of buildings such as the Tindal Street 'island', and even in recent years old buildings have been replaced by new ones on the same medieval sites without regard to the suitability of such sites for modern conditions.'¹⁹

Planners would now regard the preservation of medieval sites as essential for retaining the individual character of a place, and not just for history's sake. Similarly, with Tindal Street, he wrote of the



2. Diagram of Chelmsford Town Centre as Proposed [1952]

The main Proposals include:-

1. Construction of a new inner relief road from Market Road to London Road and its later extension via Friars Place to Baddow Road
2. Diversion of Victoria Road at the Duke Street end to form a continuous route with the Inner Relief Road
3. Construction of Branch Roads from the inner Relief Road:-
 - a. To Coval Lane via Burgess Well Road
 - b. To London Road along the north bank of the River Can
4. Transfer of the Cattle Market to a site north of Victoria Road
5. Extension of the Central Shopping Area over the Bell Hotel site
6. Provision of a new car park west of Tindal Street
7. Provision of a new car park east of High Street
8. Reservation of a site between the railway and Market Road for a County College
9. Redevelopment later of the area between Victoria Road and the railway for warehouses
10. Use of the flood meadows next to the River Chelmer east of the town centre as a public park

Essex County Council, *County of Essex Development Plan, Report of the Survey Part II, Town Map Areas, Central Essex* (Chelmsford, 1952) Plan C.375. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office)

'old buildings, mostly of no particular architectural merit, which still retain their original sixteenth-century layout and which, if not obsolete, are certainly not as useful as their central position demands...Architecturally, neither in Tindal street nor in the 'island' are the buildings of sufficient note to justify their preservation, if by so doing the replanning of the far more important Tindal Square is prevented...The continuous improvement of Chelmsford should be one of our main objects in planning. The time has come to recognize that Tindal Street and the 'island' are both inconvenient and uneconomic and that, if retained, they will continue to be obstacles to the progress and development of the town.'²⁰

If there was no direct challenge to this view of Tindal Street, there was a contrary view expressed by Lynton Lamb in his book *County Town: backs and fronts in Kennelsford*, a thinly disguised portrait of Chelmsford published in 1950. It is tempting to think that Lamb had read the Planning Survey and was responding to it. This is his view, if not of Tindal Street, then of a street very like it, and it comes much closer to present-day attitudes:

'We are in the old part of Kennelsford. The streets are narrow and the roof-line irregular. But there is little here for the *leica* [camera] of the tourist. The style is too mixed for the preserver of ancient monuments; and there are not enough beams for the fibrous-plasterers of Elstree or Wardour Street. But it is, none the less, the real thing. It has helped to form our notions of an old town, although its homely face is too familiar for veneration, too vague to

reproduce. Its historical accumulation of detail might be temporarily disturbed by modern additions; but they would be utterly destroyed by restoration. Eighteenth-century façades have been imposed on timbered gables. In the shops below are Victorian plate-glass windows.'²¹

In the centre, he saw the point that Minoprio missed:

'A town may have no cathedral, no gate-house with ancient tree. A stranger may look in vain for a square, with a river at one side and a baroque town-hall at the other. There may be no colonnades, no terrace of delightful shops, no fountain, no hotel with balconies and urbane portico. There may be no point from which can even make up his mind to take a photograph. Its details may be so mean and miserable that there will be no snap-shot for his album. Nevertheless, the stranger will know the centre when he gets there by some association of buildings that is recognizably appropriate to the place. A bank and a post-office at a cross-roads will suggest that somewhere close at hand is a police station or a public lavatory. As a dog has been brought-up to the gun or to the kitchen door, so has the townsman been given an understanding, for what it is worth, of the run of a street.'²²

Lamb relished the fact that Tindal Square

'is of irregular shape. The statue is not in its centre, and looks to no particular front. Here are five public-houses, three banks, and a glimpse of part of a police station. There is also a row of Regency shop-buildings. One of them has a roof-

conservatory; and another has a gothicked wrought-iron balcony which is one of the nicest things in the town.'²³

The balcony, alas, has not survived. The whole row would have been demolished by Minoprio to open up a view of the Cathedral and churchyard. Other buildings earmarked by Minoprio for demolition were the police station, Judge's Lodging (Maynetrees) and Guy Harlings in New Street. Leaving aside the police station, a relatively recent building of 1903-6 but nonetheless lovingly described by Lamb,²⁴ it seems perverse to sacrifice two eighteenth-century houses in a town which, according to Minoprio, was lacking buildings of architectural distinction. But the losses would have been 'more than compensated architecturally by the enhanced appearance of Chelmsford owing to the improved lay-out of the new buildings'.²⁵

The *Essex Chronicle's* cynical question – what will happen to the Chelmsford plan once it is handed over to the Borough Council? – seems to have expected the answer 'nothing', but in fact it was not as simple as that. The County Council, following the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, published a Development Plan in 1952 which included broad proposals that owed a lot to Minoprio, and yet begin to look very like the Chelmsford we know today (Fig.2). There is no grand civic centre, no new public hall or concert hall, but there is an inner relief road running from Baddow Road round to Market Road and joining up with Victoria Road, and another proposed new road under the railway viaduct joining up with Coval Lane – a modified version of Minoprio's 'riverside drive'. The cattle market is to be moved to Victoria Road, a proposal made by Minoprio and advocated also by the Borough Engineer.²⁶ The central shopping area will be extended over the

Bell Hotel site, i.e. between Tindal Square and the River Can west of Tindal Street and New London Road, with provision for car parking, the stall market, a new head post office, and commercial offices. There would be a cathedral close on the east side of New Street. The basic layout of the High Street, Tindal Street, Tindal Square and Duke Street, however, would remain unchanged.

Much of what was proposed in 1952 came to pass. The new livestock market in Victoria Road opened in 1963, and the first phase of the inner relief road, Parkway, opened in 1965.²⁷ The grounds of Guy Harlings were developed as something like a cathedral close in the 1970s. And the description of the extended central shopping area sounds, in its broad outlines, very like what was to be High Chelmer.

In March 1957 the Borough Engineer, E.P. Allen, presented to the Borough's Buildings and Town Planning Committee preliminary proposals prepared by the County Council for the redevelopment of the town centre, including the Cattle Market area and proposed Cathedral precincts.²⁸ By December, councillors were pressing for a detailed scheme to be prepared for comprehensive redevelopment of the central area, out of consideration for those who owned properties in the area and wished to submit planning applications of their own.²⁹ The Finance and General Purposes Committee determined, in April 1958, that the time was now arriving where some positive steps had to be taken to formulate their policy in dealing with the redevelopment of the central area, particularly with regard to the land the Borough Council owned: the market, and the Bell Hotel site, then in use as a car park.³⁰

Things moved on in June 1958 when T.A. Henderson, of the County Planning Adviser's Department, submitted plans for the redevelopment of the

central area to the Buildings and Town Planning Committee – plans drawn up by the County Planning Department in consultation with the Borough Engineer and Stephen Dykes Bower, the Cathedral's consulting architect. The central principles of the scheme, which incorporated some of Minoprio's proposals, were the separation of traffic and shoppers; more open space in the centre, to improve the setting of the Cathedral, Shire Hall, and other public buildings; extension of the shopping centre in the space between County Hall and the river; and the redevelopment of areas west of Tindal Street and east of the High Street.³¹ The plan was discussed at a special meeting of the Borough Council in July and led to a conference between officers of the County Planning Department, the Borough Council, and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.³² The Borough Engineer then prepared his own scheme, which councillors thought 'presented a much more attractive and compact shopping business area than that proposed by the County Planning Adviser'; it was resolved that the Borough Engineer's proposals should be submitted to the County Planning Adviser for comments.³³ Officers organised a visit to Coventry, to inspect the redevelopment in progress there, and arranged for aerial survey photographs of Chelmsford to be taken by the RAF.³⁴

In February 1961, the Buildings and Town Planning Committee considered a revised scheme by the County, which proposed pedestrianising most of the High Street, Duke Street, New Street, King Edward Avenue, and parts of Moulsham Street and Baddow Road, and to provide an underground car park. The Committee did not agree with such extensive pedestrianisation, as they felt it 'would present considerable difficulties and not give the shopping pedestrian the immunity from traffic dangers which it was hoped to achieve';

and the cost of an underground car park (£2,000 per space) would be prohibitive. The Committee also queried the need to plan for a population of 100,000, when the planned population for the Borough was only some 48,000.³⁵ The County Council were not to be moved from their position, but did follow up the Borough's suggestion of adding a third comprehensive development area (CDA) for the centre of Chelmsford: in addition to the areas north of the Cathedral and west of Tindal Street, an area was designated east of Moulsham Street and south of Baddow Road. These three CDAs would have involved the relocation of residents of a total of 230 houses or flats, but it was envisaged that the Tindal Street CDA would have included a tower block of flats that would have accommodated some of those displaced.³⁶

Faced with alternative proposals from their own Engineer and the County Council, in November 1961 the Borough decided to appoint a consultant architect, and sought the advice of the Civic Trust, which had been set up in 1957 to improve the quality of new and historic buildings and public spaces, and to help improve the general quality of urban life; the Trust's deputy director, Noel Tweddell, attended a meeting of the Buildings and Town Planning Committee the following January.³⁷ Before that, however, the Borough Engineer presented them with a third proposal for the town centre, prepared by the recently appointed Town Planning Officer, J.L. Grant, who had previously been working for the Basildon Development Corporation.³⁸ His view was that the development should indeed plan for a population of 100,000, plus a further 100,000 from the catchment area, giving a shopping need of 800 units, of which about two-thirds should be in the central area. The only satisfactory method of segregating vehicles

and pedestrians was a two-tier system, with pedestrians at a higher level using a pedestrian deck. This should cover the whole area bounded by Market Road, Tindal Street, the High Street, Moulsham Street, Friars Place, New London Road, the River Can, and the proposed Market Road/Friars Place link road (Friars Place ran between Moulsham Street and New London Road on the line of what is now Parkway). It would start some 6–10 ft above Tindal Square and run approximately 16–20 ft above existing ground level to the river bank and Stone Bridge. Under the deck would be a service road running from New London Road to Market Road serving shop stores, bank vaults, commercial garages, electricity substations and other non-public services. All shop frontages would be at deck level, access to the deck being obtained by stairs, ramps, and possibly escalators. There would be only a minimum of car parking in the central area, with a number of multi-storey car parks at suitable points on the town centre side of an inner ring road. The Borough Engineer said that this new scheme had met with the qualified approval of County Council officers and the Divisional Road Engineer. Two development companies had indicated general agreement with the principles of a pedestrian deck system. The Committee 'were of the opinion that this was the type of development they would wish to see undertaken in the town centre'.³⁹

Noel Tweddell was cautious. His preliminary view was that the pedestrian deck system was the right one for segregating vehicle and pedestrian traffic, but he needed more information. The Civic Trust agreed to provide advice to the Council, in return for a contribution to their funds equivalent to what they would have to have paid an independent consultant architect or planner. At the same time the Council appointed the firm of Hillier, Parker, May & Rowden as

professional valuers to assist the Trust.⁴⁰

Tweddell's first interim report was presented in September 1962. He considered that the 1958 scheme was unlikely to meet the town's future needs. The deck scheme he dismissed as 'inflexible in concept and difficult to build in phases, whilst the varying levels made it difficult to achieve with convenience to the public. In addition it would be costly to construct and necessitate more re-building and adaptation of property than would otherwise be necessary.' He offered to submit a new plan, modifying the County Planning Adviser's proposals.⁴¹ He presented two sketch plans in December, which completed the work that the Civic Trust had agreed to do.⁴² It was decided to appoint Tweddell as consultant architect in a private capacity, and he presented a report to a special meeting of the Borough Council in March 1963, when he was instructed 'to proceed as quickly as possible with detailed drawings for the redevelopment of comprehensive development area number 15' (hereinafter CDA 15).⁴³ A layout plan was approved in principle by the Council in June, and a detailed press statement was issued in July, although the outlines had already been reported by then.⁴⁴

The new development would be primarily given over to shopping with some offices, restaurants, flats, and a hall to replace the Corn Exchange (although it was hoped to retain the front part of the Corn Exchange 'as part of the traditional Chelmsford scene'). It would be an open precinct, mainly of three storeys but with two tower blocks, similar to Basildon Town Centre, which had been inaugurated the previous year, 1962. There would be a multi-storey car park for about 1,000 cars, a new retail open air market 'laid out on the most modern lines', and a 40-ft-wide riverside walk.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, the Corn Exchange Co. had

appointed Sir John Burnet, Tait, Wilson & Partners as consultant architects in connection with a joint proposal with Safeway to redevelop the Corn Exchange as a supermarket; they too proposed preserving the façade.⁴⁶ These proposals were consistent with the County's 1963 Development Plan.⁴⁷

Tweddell's proposals progressed from 'scheme no. 8' to 'scheme G', which was approved by the Council in January 1964 and submitted to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. The estimated cost of the development was £1,855,300, to include shops, a department store, office block, maisonettes, a petrol station, and car park. Compulsory purchase order notices were drawn up in August. Opposition to the proposals was limited. The Chelmsford Chamber of Commerce and Industry initially objected on behalf of those traders who would be displaced, but in the end withdrew their opposition as they were satisfied that the expansion of retail premises was desirable ('so long as the shops are representative of all trades'), and they accepted the principle of segregating shoppers and traffic ('so long as there is ample Car Parking and Public Transport Facilities'). The Federation of Essex Women's Institutes was unhappy about the proposed new hall: it would not be big enough for county events, and it would be on the first floor of the new building, making it difficult to bring in materials for exhibitions, especially for elderly and disabled people. These views were supported by the Essex Musical Association. In response to the various objections, both to the compulsory purchase orders and to the area covered by CDA 15, a public inquiry was held in July 1965, in the course of which most of the objections were withdrawn. The Chelmsford Society, supported by the Chelmsford Chapter of Architects, welcomed CDA 15 in principle, although they objected to the bulk of the car

park and the proposed traffic routes. 'Exciting future for the County Town' was the headline of the *Essex Chronicle's* report.⁴⁸ After the close of the inquiry, Tweddell wrote to E.P. Allen:

'I hope you are pleased with the way things have gone. I don't think I have ever experienced so little opposition to a C.D.A. of this size, although it must be remembered that you already own half the land which naturally cuts down the objections. I hope the fact that nearly all the other Objectors withdrew is a tribute to the way it has been handled.'⁴⁹

Little now happened until October 1966, when the Ministry of Housing and Local Government announced its intention to draw up a list of redevelopment schemes for loan sanction purposes; it was necessary to submit proposals for funding by November, and financial estimates were prepared as a matter of urgency. The following July it was recorded that CDA 15 had been included in the Ministry's planning investment programme for the period 1967/68–1971/72. That same month the Council approved Tweddell's latest version of the scheme, and also accepted an offer in principle by a firm of developers, Ravenseft Properties Ltd, to undertake the commercial parts of the scheme, with the council responsible for the new roads, car park, and social hall to replace the Corn Exchange (in the event, Ravenseft also undertook the construction of the social hall). Tweddell would continue to act as consultant architect, and was also engaged as architect for the car park.⁵⁰

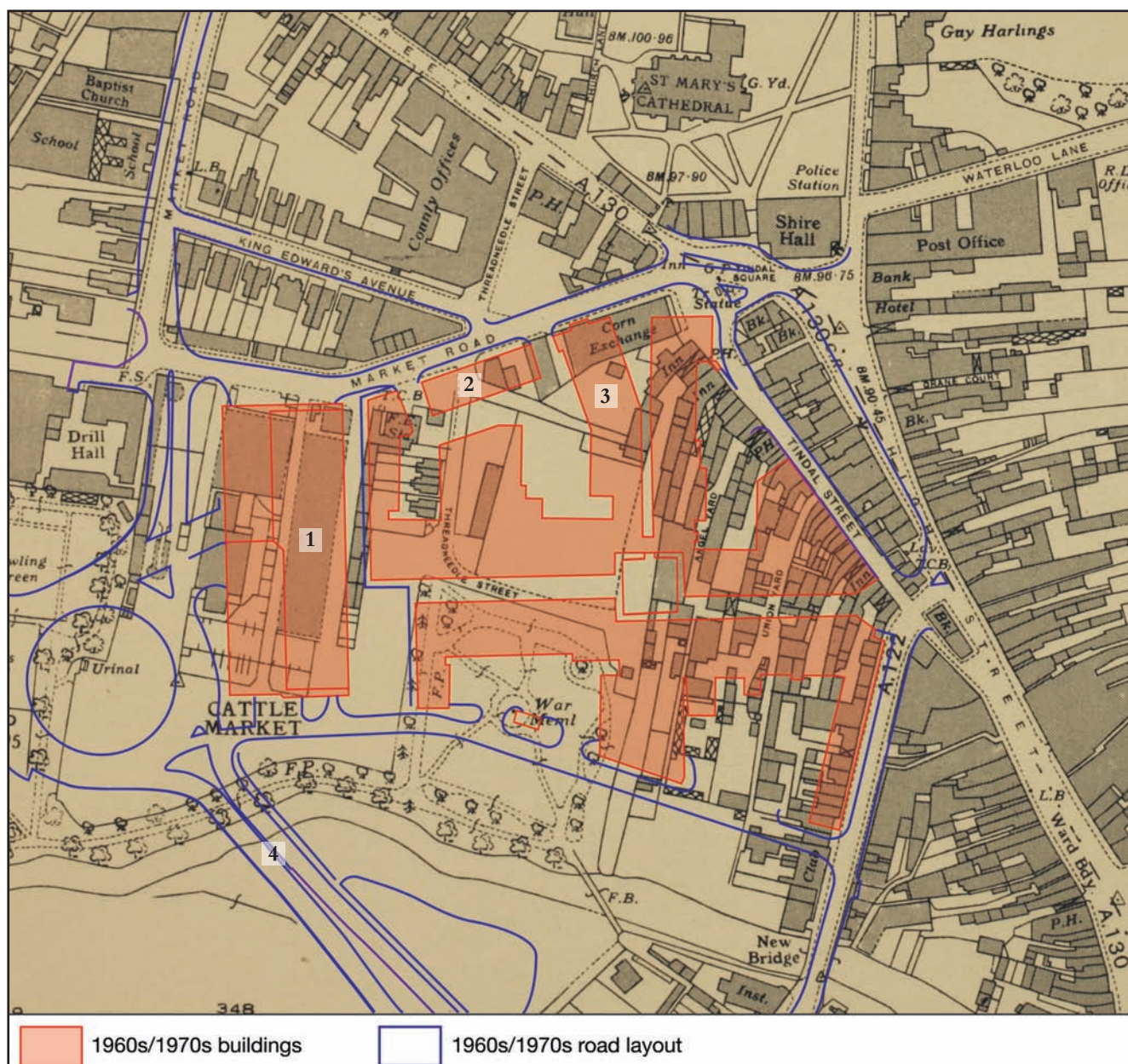
Ravenseft was a wholly-owned subsidiary of Land Securities that had been involved with the rebuilding of a number of blitzed cities, including Hull, Plymouth, and Coventry, and had also carried out developments

in a number of new towns, including Basildon and Harlow.⁵¹ They had already had dealings with the Council in 1954–5, in connection with property they owned in the High Street, when they purchased the site of the public conveniences at the junction with New London Road.⁵² In 1962 their agents, Healey & Baker, had written to the Council pointing out that they owned about 15 acres of the area proposed for redevelopment and offering to prepare a master plan at their own expense, but at that stage Tweddell gave clear advice that the Council should produce its own scheme and not be reliant upon a private development company.⁵³ But in January 1963 Ravenseft's architect Kenneth Wakeford, of Kenneth Wakeford, Jerram & Harris, wrote to the County Planning Adviser, Leslie A. Leaver, to open discussions about a redevelopment scheme Ravenseft were contemplating. It transpired that they owned 90% of the land contained by Tindal Street, New London Road, the River Can, and the Bell car park, including the frontage to the river – that is, much of the area covered by CDA 15. They were one of the initial objectors at the 1965 public inquiry, when it was reported that they owned 33 of the 70 properties subject to compulsory purchase, but withdrew, explaining that they 'could never really have had any objections to the proposals [and] are quite prepared to become partners in this scheme.'⁵⁴ Although formal agreement with Ravenseft was not reached until July 1967, they were in discussion with the Council from April 1964 and, in particular, played an important part when it came to estimating the costs of the various proposals.⁵⁵

By the middle of 1968, the scheme was already well advanced and plans were being prepared for outline planning permission, as well as the Development Agreement,

lease, and computation deeds.⁵⁶ Running of the project was now in the hands of a working party that first met on 23rd May 1968, and discussion was turning to important details such as the naming of streets within the new development (even those parts that would be roofed over were still treated as public highways, to be cleaned and policed in the normal way and not closed off at night). The term 'walks' was not liked by Ravenseft, as this implied a quiet, non-business area. For the main east-west route, Ravenseft proposed 'High Street West', but the Council's Roads Committee did not like this, neither did the General Post Office, because of the potential confusion with the actual High Street. In response, E.C. Tims of Ravenseft suggested 'an amalgam of High Street and the name of your river and this gives me "High Chelmer".'⁵⁷ What was originally just the name of the central street came in due course to be applied to the whole development.

By this stage there had been very little public consultation, and in June 1968 the County Planner, D. Jennings Smith, urged Allen to publicise the detailed plans.⁵⁸ The result of this was a number of objections to the loss of Bell Meadow, a public garden on the north side of the river that included the town's South African War memorial. Land would be made available elsewhere to compensate for the loss of this public amenity. The upshot was a second public inquiry, the issue being whether the substitute land was suitable. Twenty-six written objections had been received, of which 14 objected to the alternative land being offered by the Council; of those 14 objectors only eight had attended the inquiry, six of whom were employed in the County Planning Department. It was hardly a big obstacle to the scheme, and although the inspector found in favour of the objectors, it was agreed that the loss of Bell Meadow could be



3. Map of central Chelmsford in 1940, overlaid with the outline of High Chelmer and associated buildings and roads of the 1960s/1970s.

(1) Multi-storey car park, bus station and market, (2) Threadneedle House, (3) Chancellor Hall, (4) Parkway.

Base map: New Series 25 inch OS, sheet 54-15, 1940.

High Chelmer outline: National Grid 1:2,500 OS, sheet TL7006NE, 1974

(Sheet 54-15 reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office. Mapping by C. D'Alton)

made up by increasing the depth of the riverside walk. This was the part of CDA 15 intended for maisonettes, so an unintended consequence of the objections was the loss of the residential component of the development.⁵⁹

The demolition of buildings, on the other hand, does not seem to have been a matter of public concern. J.E. Sellers of the Chelmsford Excavation Committee wrote to Kenneth Wakeford in April 1968 pointing out that the west side of Tindal

Street was originally the west side of the High Street and included a number of timber-framed buildings, but he was not objecting to their demolition, simply asking for the opportunity to survey them beforehand; the Committee was allowed to maintain a watching brief. Other correspondents were interested in the possibility of salvaging shop fittings.⁶⁰ In 1921 the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments had identified six timber-framed buildings along

the west side of Tindal Street as worthy of preservation, of which one (the Bell Hotel at the north end) had been demolished by 1949; the Spotted Dog was thought to be fifteenth century in parts, with original king-post roof trusses, and the Dolphin Inn was early sixteenth century.⁶¹ All those buildings would now be listed, and it is very likely not only that they would turn out to be older than was thought in 1921, but that other buildings in the street would be of similar



4. Chelmsford skyline. View from the Cathedral tower, with High Chelmer in the middle distance (Author photograph, 31/08/2016)

age and type but concealed behind later fronts.

It is also certain that the Corn Exchange would now be listed, and would be regarded as one of the most important works of its architect, Frederic Chancellor.⁶² The idea of preserving the front had been quietly dropped; Tweddell's 'scheme G' showed the new social hall aligned north-south, facing Market Road, whereas the Corn Exchange faced east towards Tindal Square. There was more concern about the facilities that would be provided in the new hall, than about the loss of the Corn Exchange, which was generally regarded as an eyesore. The new hall was not intended for 'high class music productions', as it would be too expensive to design it in such a way as to provide the necessary acoustics; dancing and wrestling were the principal entertainments envisaged. As for its appearance, Tweddell was concerned to introduce more variety into the scheme, perhaps by adding some pitched roofs here and there; Wakeford tried this on the social hall, but the Council were not happy with it: it was thought to be old fashioned, whereas members 'wanted the appearance of the building to be modern and imaginative', with a distinctive front elevation that might include a coat of arms. The Borough arms were etched into the glass of the upper window, but were not as visible as was hoped.⁶³ The name 'Chancellor Hall' was adopted in October 1968, to honour its architect, who was also Chelmsford's first mayor and an Honorary Freeman of the Borough.⁶⁴

Demolition for Phase I began in May 1969 and was completed by August; the site was clear by the end of the year, ready for the contractors, Gilbert Ash (Southern) Ltd, to start work in January 1970.⁶⁵ At this very late stage, as the final elevations of the various buildings were being agreed between Noel Tweddell, on behalf of the Council, and

Kenneth Wakeford, Ravenscroft's architect, the Council released a model of CDA 15 that was displayed in various locations between June and November 1969. Only then did the town seem to wake up to what was about to be imposed upon it. C. Salter, president of the Chamber of Trade and Commerce, wrote to the Minister of Housing and Local Government, 'I do not think that I am guilty of exaggeration if I say that the Town was shocked.' Gone were open stall market and flats, gone were individual shops fronting New London Road. The differences between this, and the scheme that was the subject of the public inquiry in 1965, were so great as to justify another inquiry.

Meanwhile, the Chelmsford Society issued a joint statement with the Chelmsford Chapter of Architects, in which they too referred back to the earlier scheme, 'which was in many ways good town design...What has happened to this scheme?' They objected to the placing of the market under the car park, and to the dominance of the car park itself, but accepted that at this stage, short of scrapping the scheme and starting again, which was clearly impossible, they could only propose certain alterations by way of compromise. These included widening the pedestrian ways, redesigning the Chancellor Hall so that its entrance faced Tindal Square, masking the service yards so that their interiors could not be seen from Tindal Square and the riverside gardens, and incorporating flats. Tweddell wrote to the Town Clerk, B.A. Francis, responding to these points, and conceded only that the masking of the service yards was being done, 'but I would like to improve it if it can be done economically.' As for the flats, 'I am sympathetic in theory but I do not regard this as practical on financial or social grounds.' The objections, and the appeal to the Minister, had no effect. The Chelmsford Society remained on

sufficiently good terms with the Council to ask the Borough Engineer whether it would be possible to arrange a tour of the site in 1971.⁶⁶

The car park was formally opened on 21st September 1970. The first shops in High Chelmer were available for trading by October 1971, although practical completion of Phase I was not until January 1972, by which time Phase II (along New London Road) had been cleared for construction; Chancellor Hall was opened on 2nd June 1972.⁶⁷ The Working Party soon became mired in the intricacies of running as opposed to building a shopping centre: such matters as the provision of hanging baskets, the fouling of High Chelmer by dogs, cans and other rubbish in the fountain in Central Square, and complaints from the two supermarkets (Sainsbury's and Tesco) about the difficulty of taking trolleys to the multi-storey car park. There are no minutes of meetings after 4th July 1972. The centre was fully open by October 1973, when the *Essex Chronicle* harked back to the chairman of the Planning Committee's description of the development as 'a facelift for a gracious lady', the lady in question being Chelmsford (Fig.3).⁶⁸

How should one view High Chelmer, 43 years after its completion? Perhaps one should say, after its *first* completion, for much has changed since then, although the basic layout remains unchanged, and the car park, market and office building (Threadneedle House) are virtually unaltered. The shopping centre was refurbished in 1984–5 by architects Leslie Jones and Partners, when it was given an 'ultra modern aluminium and glass-effect barrel type roof' that covered not just High Chelmer but, for the first time, Central Square and Exchange Way.⁶⁹ Since the late 1990s there has been a constant process of refurbishment and expansion for

La Salle Investment Management by architects Bell Associates, including new entrances, additions to accommodate new anchor tenants such as Primark, and the creation of a new 'restaurant quarter' by Tindal Square, completed in 2016 (Fig.4). Future plans include replacement of the vaulted roof, and conversion of Threadneedle House to flats has been proposed.⁷⁰

As a development, High Chelmer was very much a product of its time, and in terms of its scale – the very concept of 'comprehensive development area' – grew out of the spirit of replanning that resulted from the Second World War and the opportunity that war damage offered to rethink how towns should be laid out. If the project had lingered much longer on the drawing board, it is very likely that it would never have happened. The Civic Amenities Act 1967 introduced conservation areas, and Tindal Street would undoubtedly have been protected; many of the buildings along the west side of the street would have been listed, as their counterparts on the east side were in 1978. Furthermore, local government reorganisation following the Local Government Act 1972 strengthened the role of the County Planning Department, the ethos of which, in the years following the opening of High Chelmer, was very much against this sort of comprehensive redevelopment that paid no attention to the historic context and the character of individual places.

The lack of opposition to the scheme now seems extraordinary, as does the lack of public consultation: both consultation and opposition were too little, too late. Only the objection to the removal of Bell Meadow was effective, in that it resulted in a larger riverside garden that is now an asset to the town centre. Of the various objections made by the Chelmsford Society and the Chapter of Architects,

the one that now seems most apposite concerned the service yards, 'with their ugly rear elevations, escape stairs, dustbins and piles of rubbish and cartons... wide open gashes...one of them displaying its squalor to Tindal Square and two others their sordidness to the proposed riverside gardens.' They were right, and the fault has never been remedied.

As Melville Dunbar, then Assistant County Planner and prime mover of the *Essex Design Guide* (1973), pointed out in 1974, the loss of Tindal Street helped to destroy the 'comfortable feel' of the old market town.⁷¹ Even at the time, the planners and developers admitted 'that the scheme would not be a distinguished architectural contribution to Chelmsford, although it would establish an agreeable character to be used as a precedent for other development elsewhere in the town.'⁷² Trouble was taken to make the elevations as good as they could be, with careful selection of materials (russet facing bricks, cast Portland stone, and marble facings to the ground floors of the shops) and painstaking negotiations between Noel Tweddell and Kenneth Wakeford, and it is noticeable that neither the Chelmsford Society nor the Chapter of Architects raised any objections to the aesthetic merits of the scheme, which were presumably deemed acceptable by the standards of the day.⁷³ Apart from the service yards, the weakest aspect of the development is the Chancellor Hall, particularly since its reincarnation in 2012 as Evoke nightclub.⁷⁴ The tribute to Fred Chancellor may well be one that he would not have wanted. Anthony Minoprio, on the other hand, would probably look at High Chelmer, take some credit for the concept, but think that it did not go far enough. Above all, perhaps, one should be grateful to Noel Tweddell from turning the Council away from the 'pedestrian deck' scheme, that would have destroyed not just

Tindal Street but the entire High Street in a way that is barely imaginable.

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William Landels Wild (1936–2016)

William Wild, who has died aged 80, was the first child of David and Naomi Wild. He was born at Heathrow in Harmondsworth, Middlesex, where the family had farmed for 200 years. For many families the Second World War caused much upheaval and sacrifice on behalf of the nation and for the Wild family there was to be no exception. One can imagine that for nine-year old William there must have been much of interest to look at when the Air Ministry started work on an airfield in 1944. However, it ended up meaning that the family farm was compulsory purchased and the family evicted in 1945. I well remember William telling me that the shock of having to leave the family home nearly killed his grandfather; William, 70 odd years on, still retained a huge attachment to his old home. The irony of their sacrifice was that the war ended before the airfield was completed so there was no military use for it. However, the government decided to develop it as a civil airport. The first control tower was built where the family home had stood.

The family moved first to the Shrubs at Shrub End, Colchester, before a move to Tendring in 1949. This move was also caused by the compulsory purchase of land in the area to make way for an expansion of Colchester's housing after the war! William attended school in the town before being sent to boarding school at Bishop's Stortford College. It was here that he acquired his love of cricket, playing for the school team as well as Great Bentley and Clacton. In recent years, I would always try and tempt William to come to an ERO event or other, and William, while he would say it was a long way to come for such a thing, from the 'other side of Colchester', did generally manage the journey to see Essex play at the County Ground as often as he could, being a member there.

William's first job after school was at the Bypass Nursery, Colchester, but this was interrupted, as for so many of his generation, by National Service. His stint as a Radar Mechanic appeared to involve making cups of tea and playing lots of football on Salisbury Plain! Once his time was up, two years at Writtle Agricultural College followed where he was in the hockey and cricket teams. Upon completing his two years, William started working for his uncle John at Pound Farm, Thorington, and made the move there. He lodged with one of the farm workers and his wife and they took it upon themselves to look after him. It was here that William became a member of Wix young Farmer's Club, eventually becoming a popular Chairman with many friends. Pound Farm was to become his home and where he became an active Local History Recorder.

William played hockey for Clacton for many years and when he was no longer able to play he

became a referee so was able to carry on enjoying the game. He was also the President of the club. Another interest that William had was of family and local history and this is where our paths crossed. William, along with many of us, enjoyed attending lectures and course at the Centre for Local History at the University of Essex, completing the certificate in Local History and being a



faithful and welcome attender of local history events such as the Dudley White lecture. I remember William did not have the trouble that the rest of us students did in choosing a topic or documents to look at for he had an extensive family archive stretching back through the time the family was at Harmondsworth. From this material and his research he published a history of the Wild family in the *West Middlesex Family History Society Journal* (2005).

William also made much use of the Colchester Branch of the Essex Record Office and when this closed continued his research by consulting documents at Wharf Road, Chelmsford. While his visits were few, it was always a delight to talk to William, he always made a point of looking me out. Our shared agricultural backgrounds were always a topic of conversation along with the highs (and lows!) of the England Cricket team! I saw him last early this year, I think he'd come in to confer with Dr Chris Thornton, as he often did, being a loyal supporter of the Victoria County History Essex Trust. I shall think of William when I'm on duty in the Searchroom – a real gentleman and a pleasure to have known.

William died on the 23rd August at the St Helena Hospice, Colchester, just ten days after his younger sister Elizabeth had also passed away there. They had lived together for many years. Their well-attended funeral took place on Monday 19th September at St Mary Magdalen, Thorington. A Service of Thanksgiving followed at Prettygate Baptist Church, Colchester.

Neil Wiffen (with assistance from Mrs Jane Bedford, Dr Herbert Eiden, Dr Alison Rowlands, Dr Chris Thornton and Mr James Wild)

Book Reviews

Elizabeth Allan,
**Chepyng Walden: A Late Medieval
Small Town, Saffron Walden
1438–1490,**
pp.[xiv] & 218. ISBN 978-1-87366-915-0.
SWHS Publications, 2015, £10.00.

This book is the fourth, and by far the longest so far, of the products of the publishing arm of the Saffron Walden Historical Society.

‘Chepyng’ Walden was the earlier name of Saffron Walden. Had its use survived into modern times, it would presumably have become ‘Chipping’, as in Chipping Ongar. As it happens, the period covered by this book saw the first documented appearance of the saffron-growing industry in the area, but the name change did not occur, as far we can tell from written documents, until the sixteenth century.

The book is based on the author’s doctoral thesis of 2011. Its academic origins are evident in its structure and techniques. There are, for instance, two introductions. The first is an introduction to the book as a whole: – a personal statement from the author in her own voice. The second represents the introduction to the original thesis, and is in effect an introductory chapter. It is concerned among other things with a definition of the word ‘town’. This is necessary in order to ensure that comparison with other towns is on a like-for-like basis. Such comparisons occur regularly throughout the book, as does the testing of other historians’ theories against the evidence from Saffron Walden. The book is densely packed with facts and statistics, and repays careful reading. Readers more used to lighter works of local history may need to make a conscious effort to slow down. For instance when books, articles or theses are referred to in the text, this is often solely by the surnames of their authors; and the reader will have to turn to the references or bibliography to know which other towns, or which arguments, are being discussed.

The reason for the particular date coverage is only briefly explained. The start was chosen primarily because the surviving churchwardens’ accounts begin in 1438. In addition there are manorial court records covering 1438 to 1440; and the first surviving reference to the local cultivation of saffron is from 1444. The reason for ending in 1490 is less clear, other than that it allows the work to cover, in the author’s words, ‘the mid 15th century depression and the subsequent period of potential recovery’. It may also have something to do with perceptions about the boundary between the ‘late medieval’ and ‘early modern’ periods. As is to be expected, much information from earlier and later times is included. The author gives an outline of the earlier history of the town by way of introduction, and has to fill in some of the gaps in the record

by reasoned deductions from what happened before and after the chosen period. This reviewer senses that perhaps the author would have liked to have carried the story on into the sixteenth century.

The first great change in Walden’s status and system of government occurred as late as 1549, when it became a corporate town; and one of the topics on which she allows herself to speculate is whether the Holy Trinity Guild, established by charter in 1514, provided the town’s elite with a ‘rehearsal’ for full local government.

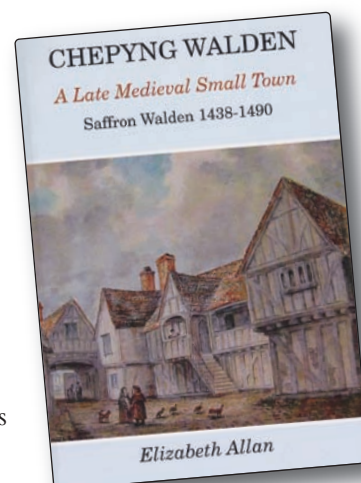
The structure of the book is by topic, rather than chronological. A reader interested, for instance, in architecture will therefore find most of what he or she needs in the two chapters on *The Building Industry* and *Buildings and Neighbourhood*. Other chapters cover *Landholding*, *Making a Living*, *Governing the Town*, *Social Structure*, *Women and Household*, and *Religion and Education*.

One of the chapters is on the saffron trade. It summarises the story of the growth and marketing of the product in Europe, before going on to describe the cultivation of the crocus in Saffron Walden and its surroundings, and its economic importance. It is interesting to note that, although there is much surviving documentation on the growing of saffron locally, where and by whom, there is virtually none on the marketing and sale of the crop. This chapter even has its own appendix of references, separate from the references for the book as a whole, and could be read as a stand-alone monograph.

There is a useful glossary, although some of the definitions are unduly simplistic. For instance ‘vill’ is described as ‘the smallest unit of local government’, which begs the question of whether local government, separate from manorial administration, really existed in late medieval England, outside the towns. A number of entries in the glossary are there to explain historians’ terms, such as *pays*, to the general reader.

The book contains 94 figures and 26 tables. However the category of ‘figure’ includes newly-drawn maps, graphs and additional tables. (The difference between the tables numbered as such and those numbered among the figures is unclear.) Only about 50 of the figures are pictorial illustrations, mainly modern photographs of buildings or details thereof. All the figures and tables are in colour, except for copies of originals which are themselves not coloured. It also includes full references, bibliography and indexes.

It will be evident from the above that the book is longer than the page-count might lead one to expect. The type is small, the margins are narrow,



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and the tables and illustrations, although plentiful, are mostly not large. This, along with the glossy paper on which it is printed, and the paperback binding, makes it not the most comfortable book to read. However these are acceptable compromises,

enabling the publishers to adhere to their stated policy of keeping prices low:- in this case remarkably so for such an important study.

Richard Harris

**Georgina Green,
Sir Charles Raymond of Valentines and
the East India Company,**
pp.164, ISBN 978-0-95079-152-4.
Hainault Press, 2015, £15.00.

This is another excellent book by well-known local historian and author, Georgina Green, whose main area of interest is the Essex/London border around Woodford and Ilford. Her latest book is a biography of Sir Charles Raymond of Valentine House and his associations with the East India Company. Valentines is a large Georgian mansion in Ilford which was the home of Sir Charles Raymond from 1754. I'm sure than many readers will remember that Georgina wrote a short article on Sir Charles for this publication, which appeared in the autumn 2008 issue.

He was a successful sea captain during the eighteenth century and later active in the City of London. He became a ship owner; his ships and the adventures of the captains and crew are detailed.

There is no doubt that the author has carried out an extensive amount of research. Unfortunately some records, which would have been useful to her, have not survived, but she has meticulously pieced together essential information from other sources, and should be congratulated for this extensive research.

The book is in good chronological order and conveniently divided into three main sections. The first covers Charles Raymond's childhood in Devon, family links with the East India Company and his six voyages to India. The second part looks at his shipping interests after his retirement, and his continuing association with the East India Company. It was from this time that he permanently resided at Valentine House. The final part examines his significant work in the City, when he became a banker and a baronet. At the end of each section is a very helpful and detailed list of sources.

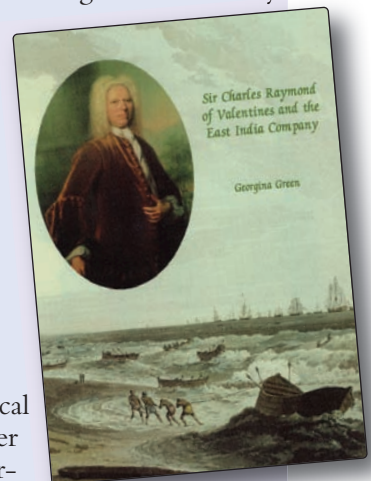
It is likely that readers of *Essex Journal* will be particularly interested in Sir Charles Raymond's association with Essex and they will not be disappointed. Quite apart from his ownership of Valentine House and its estate, he also owned other properties in the vicinity such as Highlands and a London house. Among his appointments was, High Sheriff of Essex and a Master Keeper of Epping Forest. There is much to interest Essex historians as well as those interested in eighteenth century shipping, commerce and life, particularly the history of the East India Company.

The book is well illustrated with maps, portraits, buildings and vessels. In fact the author should be congratulated for finding so many relevant illustrations for a book largely about the eighteenth century. One disappointment is that, despite considerable enquiries, the locations of an original portrait of Sir Charles Raymond and a miniature of him are no longer known, which is unfortunate. Nevertheless his portrait does appear on the front cover and inside.

There are no less than 11 very helpful appendices, of which five provide genealogical information and the remainder details of cargoes, values, journeys, careers and principal managing owners of ships. There is a good index and the book, which is perfect bound, is attractively presented in a colour cover.

The author has provided extensive genealogical information about the Raymond and related families of considerable interest. However I think the book would have benefited from the addition of family trees to show the various relationships. Apart from that this is an outstanding book, which I commend to you.

Adrian Corder-Birch



**Jonathan Oates,
Tracing Your Ancestors Through Local
History Records: a guide for family
historians,**
pp.148, ISBN 978-1-47383-802-4.
Pen & Sword Books, 2016, £14.99.

Family history is of limited interest if confined to the compilation of lists of ancestors of whom

nothing is known. The fascination of tracing one's descent comes from learning about the lives that forebears lived and the environment and conditions in which they existed.

This book is designed to provide family historians with a comprehensive survey of local history records which could enlighten them about the background to their forerunners' existence. The author, Jonathan Oates, is Ealing Borough Archivist and Local History Librarian and his knowledge in this sphere is extensive.

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He begins by providing a brief outline of English history. He then discusses the use of photographs, prints and paintings, local newspapers, maps, local authority archives, school records, parish magazines, guide books, electoral registers, charity documents, diaries, title deeds and religious archives.

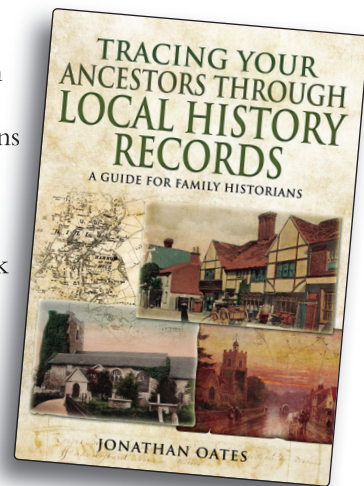
He indicates the periods covered by different records and the places where they can be found. He includes National Archives at Kew and describes the various records available there. He continues with other national repositories, including the British Library, the Bodleian Library at Oxford and other university collections.

Reference is made to county and local histories

and to the internet and Wikipedia. Many other sources of information are mentioned.

This is a book for local historians as much as those tracing families. Older books, such as those by F.G. Emmison and W.G. Hoskins, cover similar ground, but this book is a good up to date introduction to local history records for anyone embarking on research into local or family history.

Stan Newens



**Andrew Phillips & Rebecca Davies,
Ellisons 1764–2014: Solicitors of
Colchester,**
pp.122. ISBN 978-1-90927-710-6.
Strathmore Publishing, 2014.

The firm of Ellisons Solicitors in Colchester is one of the survivors. Its story follows an arc common to so many other firms of local and regional solicitors in this country. Ellisons like other firms, was, almost from its inception as the sole practice of William Mason in 1764, an important part of the civic and private life of the town that it called home. These similarities do not however make the firm's story of any less importance to the story of Colchester as a whole. This book, by Andrew Phillips and Rebecca Davies, charts this familiar story across the decades from the firm's tentative start at the dawn of the solicitors profession to its deserved celebrations of its 250th anniversary.

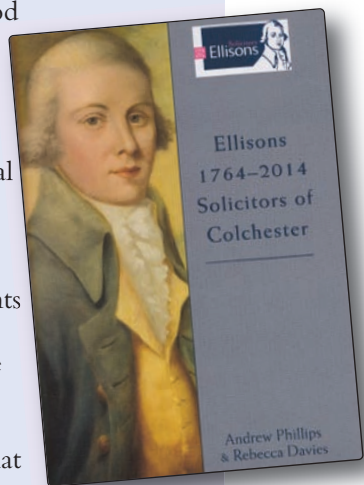
Like Ellisons, Andrew Phillips is one of Colchester's institutions and has penned a canon of literature on the town of Colchester. His writing, together with that of Rebecca Davies, clearly shows a passion for the history of the town and Ellisons' part in it. My initial reaction to this publication was of one which ran the risk of being a mere vanity piece for the firm: high on production values but low on content. I was pleasantly surprised to find that not only was the book beautifully produced and printed but its content was solid. Phillips' historical rigour is clear from the off and the history of the firm from its early days appears well researched. I say

appears as the volume contains no references to the many reams of documents which must have been consulted during its creation. While this limits the book's use as an historical text it does not damage the story which is told.

Surprisingly, despite having a keen interest in legal history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was the commentary on the firm's recent history which piqued my interest. Delivered by way of interviews with the solicitors who lived it, we are treated to an insight into a local firm in a period of immense change (a period during which I have also spent time working within a law firm).

This publication does have its shortcomings. Primarily this is the lack of referencing for the historical material consulted which is of some disappointment to me as an historian. The book also, probably by reason of the proximity of events and the commercial sensitivities, takes a very rose tinted perspective of the firm's more recent years. While Ellisons are one of the survivors, I cannot help but feel that the inevitable difficulties of the recent recession could have been addressed at least in part. Bearing in mind these caveats, I still feel that I can heartily recommend this book to those with an interest in the civic and social history of Colchester and the formation of this archetypal regional law firm.

Edward Harris



**Paul Rusiecki,
Under Fire: Essex and the Second World
War, 1939–1945,**
pp.xiv & 307. ISBN 978-1-909291-28-7.
Essex Publications, 2015. £18.99.

This is the first title of the Essex Publications imprint of the University of Hertfordshire Press, a series created to 'publish important scholarly studies

on the historic county of Essex', the brainchild of Dr Chris Thornton. Well, if further titles are as half as impressively and meticulously researched and fluidly written as this then the historian of Essex will have treats aplenty in store – I think that it's quite simply a magnificent book and I don't say that lightly. The Second World War has featured large in my life, mainly from family involvement in it, from my 'fighting' uncles to my home front parents, and I have grown up with stories and memories of the war that are still strong and resonate today, so

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much in Rusiecki's book was familiar, yet much was new to me which was very welcome.

The book is broadly divided into chronological chapters, but within it there are thematic sections, so it is much more than a cod retelling of the Home Front. Primarily using the extensive archival collections of the Essex Record Office, there is much to savour. In particular much use is made of the diaries of the Colchester Castle curator Eric Rudsdale, who was nothing if not pungent in his opinions! I suppose it is worth remembering that Rudsdale's views must have been fairly extreme compared to the 'ordinary' Essex resident, and thus the prominence that he is given through the book needs to be considered, but he did voice his thoughts and full use is made of them.

The German bombing campaign of 1940/41 is just one topic dealt with, Rusiecki bringing out many stark facts: by December 1941 over 15,000 buildings had been completely demolished with 226,000 damaged but repairable and 346,000 slightly damaged while over 2,000 residents of Essex were killed and over 12,000 injured. The worst disaster of this period was on the night of 9/10th September 1940 in West Ham when the South Hallsville School, Canning Town, was bombed, being full of refugees, contemporary reports stating 200 casualties. After 12 days of clearing the rubble the official figure given for number of deaths was 73 but locals believed that 400 to 600 were killed. Sobering stuff.

But Essex did not just take it, as it was also was an important contributor to the war effort. Hoffmann made ball-bearings, Marconi electronics, Crittal ammunition boxes and Bailey Bridges, Brightlingsea mine sweepers and Paxman landing craft engines to name but a few examples. The railways are not forgotten, especially in moving around munitions. Some 10,000 bombs were moved in the two months before D-Day to dumps around Bures, Pebmarsh and White Colne. There were many still there in March 1946 when my Dad and Granddad were invited by Walter Harris to go ferretting for rabbits in the Bures area. Stacks of bombs were still just lying around waiting to be disposed of. Public access was not restricted – imagine that today!

The Maldon by-election of 1942, following the death of the Tory MP Sir Edward Ruggles-Brise, is given a chapter to itself and the campaign between Reuben Hunt (Conservative) and Independents Tom Driberg and R. Borlase-Matthews. I came to this with no previous knowledge and I was glad to read the story about Driberg's surprise victory. Subsequently re-watching the *World at War* was thus made more interesting when Driberg was interviewed in one episode. It was good to know some of the back-story, the facts behind such an important event in the political history of the Second World War – and it happened in Maldon.

This is not just a history book, but also a book that is relevant for today. The incredibly interesting views of the Bishop of Chelmsford on the progress of the war are used to good effect. Especially telling, at a time when replacement of the Trident nuclear deterrent is bandied around by those trying to establish who is the most patriotic or has the interests of the country most at heart, is his following quote about the bombing of Hiroshima:

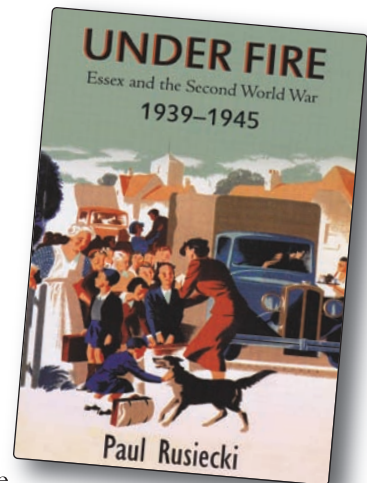
'The effect of this abomination has been described in the press in lurid language... The bomb we are told, was to obliterate everything and every person in a large city of several square miles. It is quite idle to pretend in view of this claim that only military objectives and war workers were aimed at. The use of this missile beyond question wiped out scores of thousands of young children and women who were no more a legitimate target than are the people who read these words. It is quite impossible...to defend this kind of warfare. When the flying bombs and rockets were falling on us we charged the Germans with indiscriminate slaughter of non-combatants. That is precisely what the Allied Nations have done to a degree a hundred times greater than did the Nazis' (p.286).

It drives home the point that even such a 'just war' as the Second World War is actually a complex and difficult thing to get 'right'. Something that politicians, who suggest sending in our bombers to alleviate the terribly confused situation in Aleppo, would do good to remember.

It contains four maps and a small, yet well selected collection of photos (but these are not comprehensively referenced!), fully footnoted text (although 'Women at War' is by Jo Alexander and not J. Wilkinson) and is finished with an extensive bibliography and an index. Nicely produced on good quality paper and with a great cover what's not to like?

All power to your pen Paul for your between the wars, or post WW2 sequel, you've set the bar high not only for yourself but for those who are to follow with their own titles!

Neil Wiffen



Robert Charles Anderson

Robert Charles Anderson was born in 1944 in Bellows Falls, Vermont. His first choice of career was as a rocket scientist but he soon came to understand that he did not have the maths for it. University was interrupted from 1965–9, when he served in the US Army, as an electronics intelligence analyst in West Berlin. Returning to Harvard, he studied biochemistry, and moving on to the California Institute of Technology, he earned an MA in biology. In 1973, he discovered that some of his ancestry led back to New England and thence back to England. After a period studying genealogy and history he initiated the Great Migration Study Project (1988) at the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston, Massachusetts. This Project, of which he is still the Director, has published 12 volumes on the families that settled New England in the 1620s and 1630s.



- 1. What is your favourite historical period?** Weimar and Nazi Germany. How did the promise of the former turn into the nightmare of the latter?
- 2. Tell us what Essex means to you?** The part of England I know best, where I feel most at home, having travelled and researched there for 30 years.
- 3. What historical mystery would you most like to know?** Was Tarshish, from the Old Testament, identical with Tartessos, a culture which flourished in Spain early in the first millennium BC?
- 4. My favourite history book is...** A three-volume set by Richard Evans: *The Coming of the Third Reich* (2004); *The Third Reich in Power, 1933–1939* (2005); and *The Third Reich at War* (2009).
- 5. What is your favourite place in Essex?** Saffron Walden, because it retains so much of the look of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the people I study every day were alive.
- 6. How do you relax?** Reading. Anything.
- 7. What are you researching at the moment?** Those strands of the English Reformation that over 1530 to 1630 became entwined with one another and led to the Great Migration to New England.
- 8. My earliest memory is...** at the age of about 3 being bathed by my mother at home, when a tree was struck by lightning and I levitated out of the tub.
- 9. What is your favourite song/piece of music and why?** *Nice, Nice, Very Nice*, by Ambrosia (1975) which perfectly evokes the world of Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle*, one of my favorite books..
- 10. If you could travel back in time which event would you change?** Donald Trump from coming to the attention of the general public.
- 11. Which four people from the past would you invite to dinner?** I would be content with William Shakespeare and Charles Darwin, the two most capacious and insightful intellects of the last 500 years.

12. What is your favourite food? Thanksgiving dinner: roast turkey, bread stuffing, mashed potatoes, kernel corn, cranberry sauce and gravy.

13. The history book I am currently reading is... *Hidden Figures*, by Margot Lee Shetterly, an account of the recruitment of female African-American mathematicians during World War II to work as aeronautical engineers.

14. What is your favourite quote from history? 'I beseech ye in the bowels of Christ, think that ye may be mistaken', Oliver Cromwell, 1650.

15. Favourite historical film? *Black Robe* (1991), portraying a French Jesuit priest attempting to convert the Algonquian Indians of Quebec in 1634.

16. What is your favourite building in Essex? High Laver church, which ties together three diverse, fascinating people: Roger Williams, one of the most cantankerous Puritan ministers who came to New England; Damaris (Cudworth) Masham, daughter of the Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth, wife of Francis Masham, and a woman of great intellectual attainments in philosophy; and John Locke, the philosopher, who came to High Laver in 1691 so he could commune with Damaris and died there in 1704.

17. What past event would you like to have seen? The Gettysburg Address.

18. How would you like to be remembered? As a competent problem-solver who has added to our understanding of that portion of the English Reformation that led to the Great Migration from England to New England between 1620 and 1640.

19. Who inspires you to read or write or research history? The 20,000 men, women and children of the Great Migration.

20. Most memorable historical date? D-Day. I was two weeks old and often ponder the fact that as I was learning to live, millions of Allied soldiers and all their equipment were preparing to cross the English Channel, under the umbrella of the greatest disinformation campaign of all time.



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