

Essex JOURNAL

A REVIEW OF LOCAL HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

Autumn 2017

Remembering the charter of the Forest

And much more ...

EJ 20 Questions:
Dorothy Lockwood

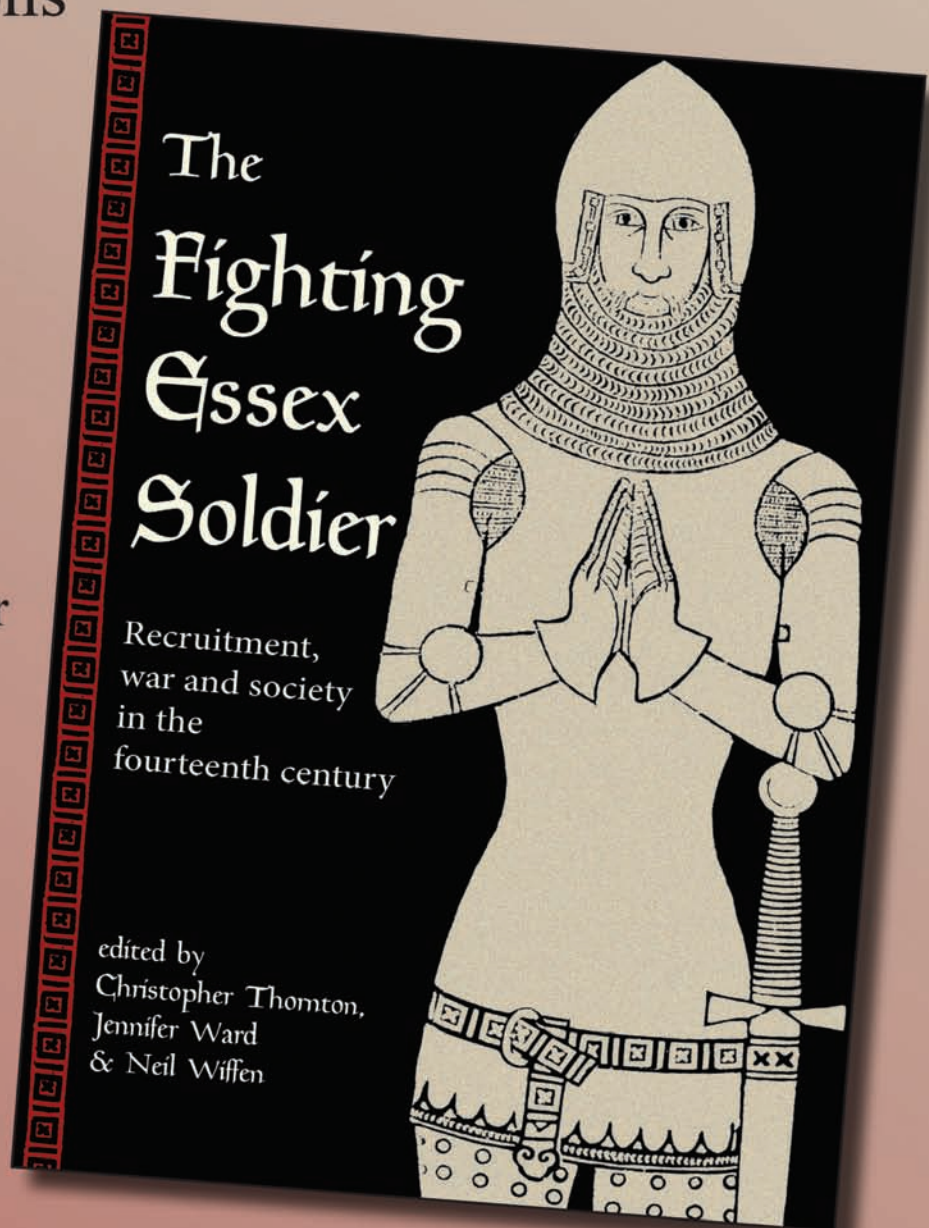
Available to order now

£18.99 RRP

ISBN 978-1-909291-88-1

Essex Publications
an imprint of
UH Press

The wars of the fourteenth-century English kings with France and Scotland resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of men involved in warfare on land and sea. This book draws upon new research to identify and analyse these soldiers at all social levels in the specific context of the county of Essex.



Find out more at www.UHPress.co.uk

Follow us on twitter @UHPress

Like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/UHPress

EP
Review on
page 85

The ESSEX JOURNAL is published twice a year under the management of an Editorial Board consisting of representatives of the Friends of Historic Essex, the Essex Record Office (on behalf of the Essex County Council), the Essex Society for Archaeology and History and the Honorary Editor. It is recognised that the statutory duties of the County Council preclude the ERO from sharing in the financial commitments of the consortium.

Chairman: A. Corder-Birch:
chairman@essexjournal.co.uk

Hon. Editor: N. Wiffen, MA:
editor@essexjournal.co.uk

Hon. Treasurer: G. Willden:
treasurer@essexjournal.co.uk

Hon. Secretary: Samantha Butler
secretary@essexjournal.co.uk

Hon. Membership Sec: J. Townsend:
membership@essexjournal.co.uk

The annual subscription is £10.00.
For further details of how to subscribe
please contact the **Hon. Membership Sec**
or visit:

www.essexjournal.co.uk/subscribe

Notes to contributors

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

Disclaimer

Items printed in the *Essex Journal* do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or Editorial Board. Contributors, on behalf of the *Essex Journal*, have made every effort to trace and acknowledge ownership of all copyrighted material and to secure permissions. The Editor would like to hear of any inadvertent omission in the acknowledgement of copyright material.

Copyright

All written material, unless otherwise stated, is the copyright of the *Essex Journal*. Enquiries to the Editor.

Cover & right: Condemned to hunt for eternity, King John from a fourteenth century manuscript. (© British Library Board, Cotton Claudius D. II, f. 116)

CONTENTS

Editorial	47
Orchards East	48
News from the Essex Record Office	49
Friends of Historic Essex	50
Tuesday 29th October 1940 further explored	51
The 800th Anniversary of the Charter of the Forest 1217, and its Relevance to the Forest of Essex	
Richard Morris	53
Rev Dr Foote Gower: a forgotten Essex antiquary and field archaeologist	
Michael Leach	62
'You have gone too far and an apology is needed': the saga of enlarging St Martin's, Chipping Ongar, 1880-84	
James Bettley	68
The Red Cross in Essex 1914-1918: Hospitals, Fundraising, and the Contribution of Middle and Upper Class Women.	
Caroline Wallace	78
Book Reviews	85
Christopher Thornton, Jennifer Ward & Neil Wiffen (eds), The Fighting Essex Soldier: recruitment, war and society in the fourteenth century	
Ray Clark, The Great British Woodstock: the incredible story of the Weeley Festival, 1971	
Jane Greatorex, A Fresh Look at the First Three Aubrey de Veres, from Pre-Conquest to the First English Earldom	
Imogen Gray, Clues in Fiction: An Essex Couple's Secret Ties	
Robert Burrell, Victorian Freemasonry and the Building of Tilbury Docks	
EJ 20 Questions? Dorothy Lockwood	90



Firstly, a confession to you all before I carry on: If you hadn't already noticed I'm a white, middle-class, middle-aged MAN so what I'm about to say has to take this 'baggage' into account!

Now that's understood you might be wondering what I'm going to write. Well, imagine my surprise when I heard the BBC *Look East* headlines that Horatio Nelson (1758-1805) was a white supremacist. Not feeling up to watching the bulletin I searched the Internet to find the source of the story. It originated from an article written by Afua Hirsch ('writer, broadcaster, barrister and human rights development worker') in *The Guardian* - 'Toppling statues? Here's why Nelson's column should be next' (22/08/2017). To paraphrase, Hirsch argues that there are 'problems Britain faces in confronting its past' as unlike in the US 'The colonial and pro-slavery titans of British history are still memorialized' (i.e. Rhodes in Oxford and Colston in Bristol). We celebrate both Wilberforce the abolitionist but also Nelson the 'white supremacist' and 'have "moved on" from this era no more than the US has from its slavery and segregationist past. The difference is that America is now in the midst of frenzied debate on what to do about it, whereas Britain - in our inertia, arrogance and intellectual laziness - is not.'

A few years ago someone had a pop at Churchill (1874-1965) (named 'Greatest Britain' in a 2002 poll) for his imperial leanings and racism. This is along similar lines - Churchill was as much a product of his times as was Nelson. We need to understand who OUR ancestors were, the times they lived in and the beliefs they held. Nelson was a man of conventional eighteenth century beliefs along with (hundreds? thousands? millions?) of other white Europeans who actively participated or benefitted from the slave trade. We, in the second decade of the twenty-first century would not countenance it today.

As with all past events, it's complicated. Liz Bonnin's discovered this when her *Who Do You Think You Are?* (WDYTYA?) was aired in December 2016. She found that she was descended from slaves, which was terrible for her but was subsequently completely taken aback when she found out that one of her own female slave descendants married the slave owner, benefitting from all that was created by the slave economy. This suggests that the story might be more complicated than just Europeans as being the oppressors and Africans the oppressed.

I take issue with being labelled as having 'inertia, arrogance and intellectual laziness' - language like that doesn't help, and is in itself lazy. I think there is a broad understanding of what happened in the past through popular programs like *WDYTYA?* or the recently transmitted BBC series *The Sweet Makers*.

And let's face it, beliefs change over time; we are completely shocked and rightly outraged when ISIS/ISIL burns prisoners alive but that is precisely what happened to heretics in this country, and indeed county, in the past. As L.P. Hartley wrote, 'The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there' and thank goodness that it is the past.

So it is not so much the 'cultural cleansing' of statues but rather the continuing education, understanding and clarification of past times so that mistakes and beliefs once held never hold sway again. It's a dangerous business saying which statues should and shouldn't be taken down - Richard the Lionheart for the massacre of Muslim prisoners at the Siege of Acre? 'Bomber' Harris?

We can all agree on an abhorrence to fascism and white supremacy but what Hirsch should be writing about is the more pressing issue of modern day slavery. A report recently estimated around '13,000 people working in conditions amounting to slavery in the UK today' - surely their freedom is worth much more of our effort than blaming the long dead for their beliefs and actions. Don't be cross with 'us' be cross with modern day slavers, be so cross that there is nowhere for them to hide and then their disgusting habits are driven out and then I'll listen to you.

'History', the interpretation of the past, isn't a straightforward process. I hope you'll enjoy the following, fully referenced articles.

Cheers, Neil

1. www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/aug/22/toppling-statues-nelsons-column-should-be-next-slavery, (08/09/17)
2. www.antislavery.org/slavery-today/frequently-asked-questions/, (08/09/2017).



Congratulations to Dorothy Lockwood who recently celebrated her 90th birthday with her four children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, extended family and friends. Many readers will know Dorothy from her involvement in Essex local history circles over the past 40 years, being active in both local societies and County organisations Dorothy holds an accomplished record of office and has received an Achievement Award from the British Association for Local History. The *Essex Journal* also benefited from Dorothy's gifted talents and proficiency and we join with others in wishing her many more years of fulfilment. Turn to page 90 to read all about Dorothy's thoughts on life and Essex.

Orchards East

On Saturday 8th July I had the pleasure of attending, and giving a paper, at the launch of *Orchards East* (OE), an exciting new environmental and cultural project covering six counties in the east of England – Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

Funded by the Heritage Lottery fund and based in the School of History at the University of East Anglia, it is devoted to discovering and understanding the past, present and future of orchards in Eastern England, and will last for three years. The project extends initiatives already developed by Suffolk Traditional Orchards Group (STOG) and other partners, including the East of England Apples and Orchards Project. A collaborative project working with existing county orchard groups, other interested organisations and orchard owners, OE hopes to stimulate interest and engage a wide range of new volunteers in all things orchard!

The project aims to work with hundreds of volunteers to survey and record old orchard sites across the East of England, as well as research the social, cultural and economic history of fruit growing in the region. Results of these investigations will be shared widely through education and publication. The project also hopes to restore important old orchards, and to create new examples, for the enjoyment of local communities.

The launch itself took place on a splendidly sunny July day at Horringer, Bury St Edmunds, where a small but enthusiastic audience was met by Prof Tom Williamson, head of the Landscape History department of the University of East Anglia. Tom outlined the broad aims of the project before introducing the first of the speakers. Paul Read, Chair of STOG, gave an insight into the history of orchards and what OE aims to achieve. Tom then explained some of the historical questions, using Norfolk examples, the project aims to answer such as how the size and number of orchards have changed over time and why.

I then gave a paper based on my MA dissertation, looking at how some farmers and growers, within the parishes of the Chelmsford Union, planted orchards to diversify their cropping options at a time agricultural depression. I couldn't resist using my home parish of Broomfield to look in some more detail at orchards that were recorded there during the nineteenth century. One was occupied by the Harris family and where they presumably marketed the Baddow Pippin from – better known to us now as D'Arcy Spice.

Next came Joanna Crosby, from the University of Essex, who is researching the history and cultural importance of the apple and the orchard in nineteenth century England. Joanna described what that century can tell us about community orchards today and in the future – a most interesting and different angle to take.

Peter Laws, founder of the *FruitID* website, explained how people have traditionally identified fruit cultivars, how the *FruitID* website can help and how fruit can now be identified by DNA finger printing. A topic of which I knew nothing but found completely absorbing. Interesting to see that many of the cultivars that people thought they had turn out to be a completely different type once their DNA was tested.

Gen Broad, OE Survey Coordinator, rounded off the day by describing the various elements of the project and how volunteers can get involved. A fine conclusion to what was an inspiring collection of inter-disciplinary papers that just scratched the surface of a fascinating subject.

Neil Wiffen

W: www.uea.ac.uk/orchards-east,

E: info@orchardseast.org.uk



The launch of
Orchards East,
July 8th,
Horringer,
Bury St Edmunds.
Left to right:
Gen Broad,
Joanna Crosby,
Neil Wiffen,
Tom Williamson,
Paul Read,
Peter Laws,
Monica Askay.
(Photograph
courtesy of OE)



You Are Hear in Essex: Where we've been and where we're going

It has been a busy two years since the Essex Sound and Video Archive (ESVA) at the Essex Record Office was awarded Heritage Lottery funding to run a three-year project, *You Are Hear: sound and a sense of place (YAH)*. Our plans for YAH were exciting, ambitious, and more than a little risky, but we have accomplished a great deal through the hard work and enthusiasm of colleagues, collaborators, councillors, and especially our valued volunteers. Here is a quick summary of what we have been doing:

- Digitising analogue sound and video recordings for preservation purposes
- Cataloguing the recordings to make them searchable on Essex Archives Online (www.essexarchivesonline.co.uk/)
- Embedding the digitised recordings in the catalogue entries, so you can listen from home
- Creation of the Essex Sounds audio map website, pinning historic and modern-day recordings of specific locations to the map (essexsounds.org.uk).
- Showcasing a selection of ESVA's treasures on interactive audio-video kiosks, one installed at the ERO, and two touring public locations across the county – currently at Maldon Library and Braintree District Museum
- Working with local communities to install 18 listening benches throughout the county: benches that play archive audio clips reflecting the sense of place where each is located
- Showcasing a selection of audio clips on two touring listening benches – currently at Belfairs Woodland Centre and Danbury Country Park.

There have, inevitably, been some hiccups along the way, but there have also been some tremendous

successes. Our listening benches have attracted the most attention. Volunteers have enjoyed learning more about their communities through listening to the archive recordings, and learning how to use audio editing software to create the sound clips – far beyond their estimations of their own IT skills. But the real enjoyment has come once the bench is installed. As one volunteer said, 'Gives me a great buzz to pass through the village and see people who are listening to the bench.'

Personally, I have been fascinated by the collection of sounds on our audio map. There are changes, but also some interesting continuities – livestock auctions sound similar to 70 years ago, but these noises have been relocated from public town centres to designated rural spaces.

In the final year we have a few more listening benches to install, and we will continue our tours of benches and audio-video kiosks. We will also press on with digitising, cataloguing, and uploading more recordings from the Archive, so keep an eye on updates in the ERO e-bulletins or check Essex Archives Online to see what has been added.

There are still opportunities to get involved. You too could become a budding sound recordist and contribute sounds of your Essex to Essex Sounds. If you are not too sure about the process, why not come on our Sound Walk event on 27th October? In the morning, our Sound and Video Digitiser will lead a walk around Chelmsford, giving instructions on how to capture sound recordings in an urban environment. The afternoon will consist of training on how to edit the recordings you have made.

The listening benches will endure beyond the end of the project, so we need volunteers to continue updating the audio. Do you want to have a say in which recordings are played by the bench in your community? Are you looking for a challenge to learn new skills, or an excuse to listen to the fabulous stories in our archive? Training can be provided as needed.

We are looking for suggestions for a final resting place for one of our touring benches: which public place in Essex would be the ideal location?

Finally, keep an eye out next spring for details of an exciting fundraising opportunity for the Friends of Historic Essex, involving the listening benches.

Please get in touch (info@essexsounds.org.uk or 033301 32467) to find out more about any of these opportunities, or sign up to receive project updates at www.essexrecordofficeblog.co.uk/you-are-hear/.

Sarah-Joy Maddeaux, Project Officer

**Funding raised by
The National Lottery**
and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



How many can you find?



Coggeshall Deeds

In May 2017 the Essex Record Office and the Friends of Historic Essex (FHE) were alerted by staff at the National Archives of the presence of some Essex manuscripts in a Sotheby's auction sale. Lot 55 was described as 'Eleven documents relating to property in Coggeshall, Essex, in Latin with a few place-names and other words in English, dated 1427 to 1574', and the estimate was given as £3,000–£5,000. The large estimate was both a product of their appearance in a major London saleroom and the involvement of members of the famous Paycocke family of Coggeshall in the property transactions.

FHE has been taking a larger role in acquiring material for the ERO, now that the County Council no longer has funds to do so. The Friends were able to put up £1,000 themselves and invited other interested parties to contribute to a joint 'war chest'. There was a marvellous response, and we successfully acquired the deeds for a total cost of £3,425.28. We are very grateful to all those who contributed: The Friends of the National Libraries (£1,000), The Coggeshall Society (£750), John Lewis (£375), The Essex Heritage Trust (£150) and The Essex Society for Archaeology and History (£150). The documents are now at the ERO and are currently being conserved and catalogued.

Only a brief description can be given here, but more details will be published shortly. Ten of the deeds relate to the descent, usually by sale, of a messuage with a curtilage in West Street in Coggeshall that lay between the field of abbot and convent of Coggeshall called Wyndmelfelde (Windmill field) on one side and the king's highway leading from Coggeshall market place to Braintree (i.e. West Street) on the other. In 1427 one end or side of the messuage and curtilage abutted the

tenement and land of Richard Aldham and the other abutted the lane leading to the windmill. Almost all of the deeds are endorsed, in probably a sixteenth century hand, 'corner howse', which may have been the name of the messuage. Thanks to the topographical reconstruction of the town by the Discovering Coggeshall project, we know that the property was on the north side of West Street close to where the later vicarage stood.

The same property was transferred in deeds of 1441, 1480, 1504, 1506 (twice), 1507, 1515, 1532, 1552 and 1574, although sometimes the details were elaborated or the description of the abutments amended. It first passed to the Paycocke family in 1480, when it was acquired by Thomas Wynlove of Stisted, fuller, and John Paycocke, otherwise called "Cosyn Peycok" of Coggeshall, butcher. This John Paycocke was the father of the famous clothier Thomas Paycocke. In his will of 1505 John left a property on the other side of West Street to Thomas, who later rebuilt it in 1509–10. It still stands as Paycocke's House, owned by the National Trust. However, Thomas Paycocke himself never came to own the property recorded in these deeds, which instead descended through other members of the Paycocke family. It left their control for a while, but the last deed in the series records that John Paycocke (great grandson of the first John) acquired it again in 1574.

Most of the deeds carry seals, the largest number being five on the deed of 1507. Some are broken or indistinct, but others include various merchant's marks, initials, and one has a lamb and flag. It may eventually be possible to identify some of them with the persons named in the deeds.

Chris Thornton, Chairman FHE

Chris Lambert, Senior Archivist (L) and Dr Chris Thornton (R) examine the deeds. (ERO)



Tuesday October 29th 1940 further explored

When I wrote the article 'Tuesday 29th October 1940: North Weald attack', (autumn 2015) I thought it would just be a stand-alone narrative piece of research, nothing particularly ground-breaking just something of interest that tied up a family story quite nicely. As regular readers will know, that was not the end of the story for in spring 2017, I updated the events of that day to take into account the death of Spitfire pilot Arthur Blake. In response to this, subscriber Ann Turner emailed me to say how interesting she had found the article and went on to say:

My Grandmother lived at Holly House which is the building next to the Rising Sun Public House. The lane at the side led down to the back of the house to where my uncle lived. We always knew it as Spurgular Cottage [on the original location map as 64a, now re-labelled correctly]. My Mother and her sister were visiting my Grandmother when the plane crashed just a few doors along. They were both 4 months pregnant at the time and had the plane crashed nearer it is doubtful if I would be here today to give you this information. I believe at one time Spurgular Cottage was owned either by the people at Oak Lodge or Elmhurst and at one of these houses there was a Doctor. Spurgular Cottage was used by one of their servants before it was owned by my Grandmother and later my Uncle. Holly House later became the Essex Record Office (ERO) for some time.¹

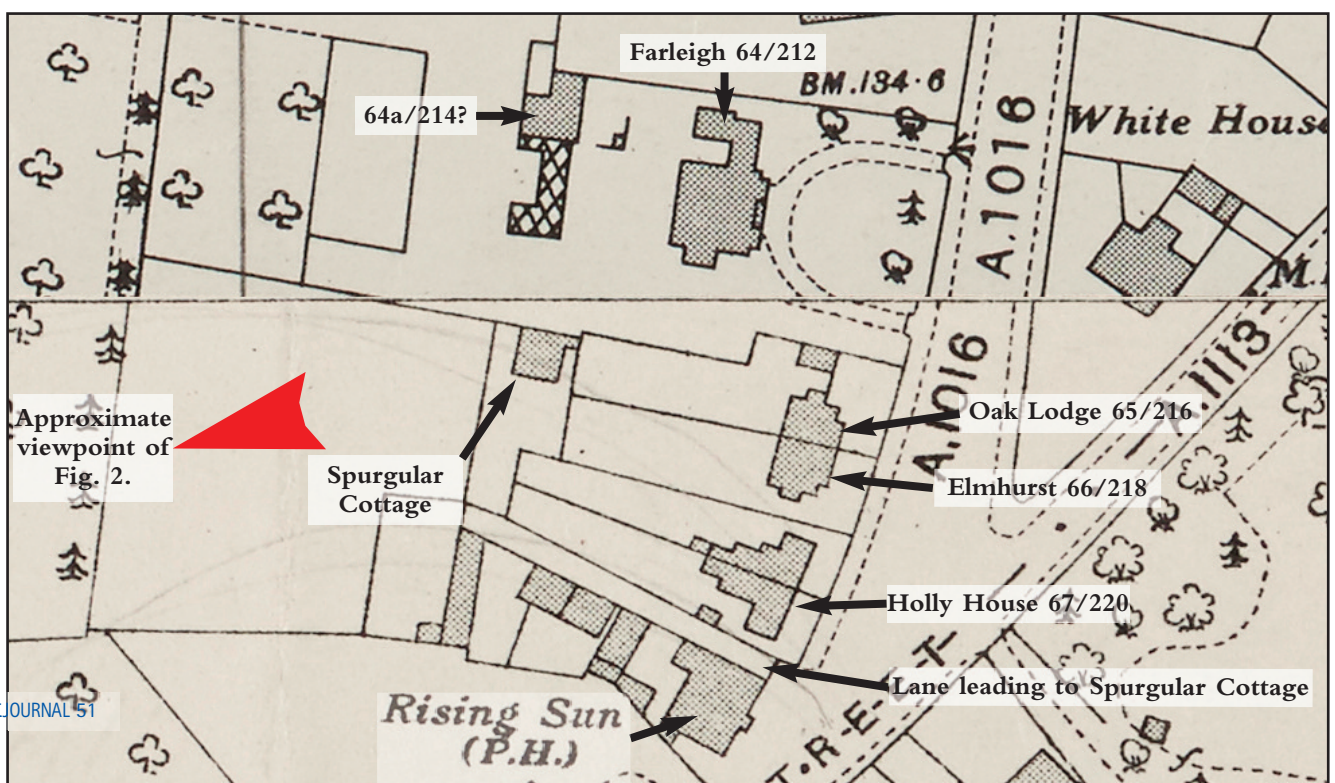
What a coincidence not only that Ann had such a direct connection with this part of Chelmsford but

also that ERO had a presence there - I wanted to find out why. There can't be many people who would remember, but someone I thought might is that great friend of the *Essex Journal* and all things to do with Essex history, Maureen Scollan:

Thanks to my having diaries for much of the time I worked in the ERO before joining the police force in 1971 I can tell you exactly when the ERO and VCH moved into Holly House. A whole wing of Ingatestone Hall was in use at that time [mid-1960s] as an exhibition centre [and] also various collections of original records stored there. I do not know how Holly House in London Road was chosen as an extra repository, but according to my diary the day scheduled for moving the Repairs Room (Rosemarie [Marshall] plus Jenny Heseltine) and quantities of documents and maps from Ingatestone Hall was 26 June 1968. VCH was also based there. I remember Ray Powell working there and Beryl Board also. I have a feeling Hilda Grieve spent some time there also as assistant editor of VCH.²

Returning to the military aspects of the 29th October, I have since talked with historian Andy Begent,³ about that day. At the beginning of July he emailed me to say 'I've dug out an intelligence report for 29/30 Oct 1940',⁴ which was duly forwarded. This interesting lead was an entry from a document compiled by 15th (Scottish) Division,⁵ who in the autumn of 1940 were based in Essex. Several entries in the report directly relate to the events of the 29th that have been discussed and reinforce the narrative that I had presented.

1. The junction of New London Road and Moulsham Street, the area where Sub/Lt Blake crashed in his Spitfire on 29th October 1940. With information from Ann Turner we can now be more certain about the location of 64a, which, along with Farleigh, is likely to have had debris from Blake's Spitfire ending up in the garden. Numbers after names are the house numbers as recorded in 1939 and after re-numbering in 1953. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office, 25 inch OS sheets 54-14 & 63-2, 1939)



The intelligence report is laid out, as you would expect, chronologically, and records anything of interest that happened over a designated time period. To me, the most exciting entry was that reported at '1645 hrs' when:

'Approx 5 German fighters with 3 British Hurricanes passed directly over 15 (S) Div H.Q. 223305 at about 400' and at a very high speed. A battle was in progress and machine gun bullets spattered the H.Q. 1 bullet was recovered and appears to be of British manufacture. No damage or casualties to this H.Q.'

The time fits perfectly with the events as I had described them, and more to the point this vivid report echoes completely the account that my Dad has always told me. Andy also confirmed that the HQ mentioned was near Crix in Hatfield Peverel so very much on a line North Weald – Chelmsford/Broomfield – Maldon/Colchester. The pure joy to a historian when pieces of evidence so elegantly fit together is hard to describe!

Further entries record ME 109s down at 16:40 (Goldhanger), 17:15 (Southminster), and 17:10. The latter was reported as being 'nearly intact' and must have been Josef Harmeling's who came down at Langenhoe. Interestingly Harmeling is said to have been 'wearing British battle dress trousers dyed blue'. These must have been left behind and captured in a dump after the evacuation of Dunkirk and the Germans then 'converted' them to Luftwaffe use.

Another entry, recorded at '1700' states: 'A British fighter crashed and was burnt out on the roof of a house at 65 LONDON ROAD in CHELMSFORD. The pilot was killed. The house was used as a billet by 58 Edinburgh Army Fd Coy R.E. There were no casualties but the house was damaged by fire'.⁶ This was Arthur Blake's Spitfire.

As to the unidentified author, with two children, of the moving letter to Blake's mother, talking with Andy and re-examining the evidence it is obvious who it might have been. I completely missed that the 'Barrington Wells' listed in the 1939 electoral register must be the 'Col. B Wells' who was the occupier when Blake's Spitfire crashed.⁷ I was fixated on the 'Col' and not the 'Wells' and thought that an army unit, as was billeted in Oak Lodge, was in Farleigh. So the obvious candidate has to be Mrs Wells who wrote the letter. An email from Andy gives further information:

I agree with the suggestion that it was Mrs Wells who sent the letter – incidentally her husband Barrington Clement Wells (1887–1951) was a grandson of Frederick Wells (1827–1908) of Oaklands. He had a distinguished military career with the Essex Regiment but also managed his grandfather's old brewery. The couple had two children – Joy born in 1925 and Percy born in 1928, so that provides the teenage evidence⁸

How did I miss that Wells link? I don't know – call myself a historian? Think I'll get my coat!

Neil Wiffen

References

1. Email to author, 11/06/2017. Ann's grandmother lived in the left hand side of 'Holly House'.
2. Email to author, 12/06/2017. Keith Dean, former Senior Conservator at ERO, says that Holly House was vacated in 1976 when everything moved to Old Court. Email to author, 14/06/2017.
3. Andy is currently preparing a revised edition of his 1999 *Chelmsford at War: a chronicle of the county town of Essex during the Second World War*.
4. Email to author, 01/07/2017.
5. The National Archives, WO 166/449, DIVISIONS: 15TH. DIVISION: General Staff (GS), 1940 Aug.–Dec. The entries that are directly relevant are from 15 (S) Division Intelligence Report No. 59, for period ending 1200 hrs 30 Oct 40'.
6. Was '58 Edinburgh Army Fd Coy' actually '586 Army Field Co' as recorded in ERO, D/B 7 S3/1 and thus part of the City of Edinburgh (Fortress) Royal Engineers ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_of_Edinburgh_\(Fortress\)_Royal_Engineers#World_War_II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_of_Edinburgh_(Fortress)_Royal_Engineers#World_War_II), 07/10/2017)) and possibly assigned to 15th (S) Division and that was why they were billeted in Chelmsford in the autumn of 1940? Do let me know if you know.
7. See ERO, C/E 2/1/22 & D/B 7 S3/1.
8. Email to author, 08/10/2017.

Acknowledgements

A big thank you to Ann Turner and Kenneth Martin for clarifying which property was which; Maureen Scollan and Keith Dean for their remembrances of the ERO and Andy Begent for his generosity with sources and common sense!

2. A snowy view of Spurgular Cottage, centre, with the rear of Farleigh, to the left, and the rear of Oak Lodge to the right. It was taken, c.1970, from allotments that are now built over. (Reproduced by courtesy of Kenneth Martin, who was born in the cottage)



The 800th Anniversary

of the Charter of the Forest 1217, and its Relevance to the Forest of Essex

by

Richard Morris

This year we are celebrating the 800th Anniversary of the Charter of the Forest (Fig. 1) which was first issued in November 1217. The 'Great Charter' of 1215, included three clauses which referred to 'forests', but much that had been promised in the negotiations was omitted. Subsequent pressure about the extent of the forests and harsh forest laws led to a separate charter being issued in 1217, when the 'Great Charter' was reissued (without the three forest clauses) and became known as 'Magna Carta'.

The Charter of the Forest addressed some of the abuses of forest law that had become increasingly common in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, and re-established the rights of free men to have access to the royal forest.

It is arguable that the Charter of the Forest is more relevant to the mass of the population than the Magna Carta, because the latter is in the main about the king's powers to raise revenues from his greater subjects, the actual feudal landowners, (although the feudal lords often passed the burden of taxes and feudal dues on to free and unfree peasants, and Magna Carta therefore had an impact on all social classes). The Charter of the Forest is specifically about forest law which affected large numbers of ordinary people. It may well be that this was of rather greater practical significance.¹

The Charter of the Forest rolled back the extent of the royal forests to those created before Henry II came to the throne. This was of benefit to both the barons and the free men of

England, as it substantially reduced the area of land subject to the harsh forest laws. During the reigns of Henry II, Richard I, and King John (cover illustration) many new royal forests had been created throughout England and these were now to be disafforested. There was a dispute regarding some of the forests created by Henry II, where it was argued that he was reinstating forests which had been lost during the anarchy of Stephen's reign.

The Introduction of the Norman Forest System in England

In Anglo-Saxon times every freeman could still hunt on his own land, and it is probable that many serfs suffered no rebuke in taking game off the limitless waste. However, between 1066 and 1284 the population of Britain at least doubled and a large acreage of new land was brought under the plough. Areas of waste and woodland between villages became arable fields, and large inroads were also made into the royal forest.² Although Anglo-Saxon kings had private woods where they forbade hunting by others, they were not covered by a separate code of law. All this was to change with the arrival from Normandy of William the Conqueror.

Norman society was less free than Scandinavian or even Anglo-Saxon, but it was more stable, and more efficiently organised for peace and war. However, the Normans were not what we should recognize as civilised people. They were quite as inhumane as the Anglo-Saxons and Danes of contemporary England, and committed deeds of revolting cruelty.

Historians have sometimes been sceptical about the extent of 'the harrying of the north' but the evidence is terribly powerful and consistent. William 'went northwards with all his army that he could collect and utterly ravaged and laid waste that shire (Yorkshire)', wrote the Anglo-Saxon chronicler.³

Between 1066 and the end of the thirteenth century a profound reshaping took place in the identities of the peoples of Britain. The Norman Conquest made Britain a realm of two peoples, the dominant Norman and the defeated English, yet by the early thirteenth century those two peoples had moulded into one and everyone, whatever their descent, was English.⁴

None of William's innovations was more hated and resented than his application of the Norman Forest system to his English Kingdom. This involved the creation of royal forests in areas of woodland, heathland and grassland in which the king had the exclusive right to hunt deer and wild boar. The areas included not only the king's own demesne lands but lands in which the soil was owned by barons, local lords of the manor, and freeholders. Nobody had the right, without royal permission, to take any of the game, wood or pasture of the forest – not even the baron or freeholder on his own land, if that land lay within the bounds of a forest.

From a legal and political standpoint, the forests were a dangerous anomaly. They were withdrawn from the operation of the common law and of the custom of the realm, and governed by rules laid down in special assizes and ordinances.

1. The Charter of the Forest,
second issue, February 1225.
(©British Library Board,
Add. Ch. 24712)



The forest was the stronghold of arbitrary power.

To declare an area as a 'royal forest' the king issued a commission in Chancery, under the Great Seal, addressed to certain persons, declaring his intention of making a forest in a certain place and County, commanding them to perambulate and view it within a limit of so many miles, surrounding it with boundaries that he might know it; all of which proceedings were to be certified to the Court of Chancery before an appointed day.

The ground being viewed, and a proper extent of territory considered, the perambulation was made and boundaries fixed of bridges, rivers, hills, highways, and sometimes particular trees. All this was certified and returned to the Chancery, when the king became entitled to his forest as a matter of record.⁵

Another writ was then issued from the Chancery to the Sheriff of the County where the forest stood, reciting all the Commissioners proceedings, commanding him to proclaim it a forest throughout the Shire, in Boroughs, Towns, Fairs, Markets &c, in which, after a certain time no one should presume to hunt. It should also be made clear that the area over which the forest laws applied was much greater than the physical forest itself. John Manwood (d.1610) defines a forest as: 'a certain territory of woody grounds and fruitful pastures, privileged for wild beasts and fowls of forest, chase and warren, to rest and abide in, in the safe protection of the king, for his princely delight and pleasure'.⁶

A comprehensive administrative and judicial system was set up to enforce strict laws, with severe penalties for breaking them. For example until the Charter of the Forest, the penalty for poaching 'the king's deer' was hanging, although the Forest Assize of 1198, set the penalty for killing deer as mutilation by removal of the offender's eyes

and testicles. Landowners had to seek approval from the forest authorities to make clearings and fell trees. Any illegal clearings or felling would result in the offender being brought before the forest courts and fined – an important source of income for the king. Forest landowners could not even erect fences or hedges unless they were low enough to allow the deer to enter and leave, consequently crops were often destroyed by them.

A Lord Warden was appointed to each forest to oversee its 'management', to ensure that there were plentiful deer for the king to hunt, and that the forest vegetation was in a good condition to provide adequate food for the deer. The Lord Warden was supported in this by foresters, woodwards, regards (surveyors), and agisters (responsible with the Reeves for counting the cattle on the forest and ensuring that they carried the parish and owners branding marks). The family of Munfichet appears to have been the earliest record holders of the office of Lord Warden in the Forest of Essex, with Richard Munfichet having been appointed by Henry II.⁷

The judicial system consisted of three levels of courts: the Court of Attachments which met every forty days, at which the verderers presided. Verderers were elected by the freemen of the county, but had to swear an oath of allegiance to the Crown. They were similar to local magistrates but limited to enforcing the forest laws. The Swainmote Court met three times a year, at which the verderers presided but at which there was also a jury; and the Court of the Justice Seat, presided over by a peer of the realm, and at which sentences and fines were confirmed.

In addition to these three courts there were forest inquisitions, of which there were two sorts, the special and the general, which formed the basis of proceedings for trespasses of venison. If any beast of the forest

was found dead or wounded an inquisition was to be held by four neighbouring townships of the forest. Persons whom the townships found to have been guilty of offences against the venison, were either sent to prison or attached to appear before the justices in eyre, the senior forest court, according to the gravity of the trespass.

The Forest of Essex

The evidence for a royal forest in Essex during the Conqueror's reign is unconvincing. Domesday Book merely records that Ranulph Gernon took a swineherd from the manor of Writtle 'and made him forester of the king's wood'.⁸ However, there was certainly a royal forest in Essex by 1104. It started in the south-west of the county and then was spread over the county by Henry I, decayed under Stephen as men ignored the laws, was revived and definitely included the whole of the county under Henry II, only to be partially disafforested by King John in 1204. In that year the men of Essex (presumably of the north of the county) paid the enormous sum of 500 marks⁹ and five palfreys for the exclusion of land north of Stane Street (the old Roman Road from St Albans to Colchester) from the forest laws.¹⁰ No further part of the county left the forest until after the Charter of the Forest of 1217.

A Source of Revenue and Patronage for the King

In 1173 and 1174 the Angevin empire was threatened by enemies at home and abroad. Henry II suppressed the rebellion, but he was in great need of money to pay his mercenary troops and meet the expenses of the war. At the forest eyre of 1175 Henry visited many towns and cities in person where forest pleas were heard, and long lists of fines for offences were confirmed. Humble men by the hundred were condemned to pay sums which must have seemed to them enormous. Ralph the smith of

Shenfield in Essex was fined half a mark and William son of Emma in Cambridgeshire owed half a mark for a cart he had in the forest.¹¹ A total of £12,000, well over £6 million today (See End Note 9) was raised.

Forest law was given a definitive form by Henry II, especially at the Assize of the Forest known as the Assize of Woodstock in 1184. Even some of the regulations in this assize were taken from the first forest assize (*prima assisa*), which probably represented the articles of the forest eyre of 1166–7.¹²

None of the surviving texts of Woodstock may be taken as ‘original’. The number of articles vary in the different texts but is usually about 13 and include the opening statement that Forest offences will henceforth be punished not just by fines but by full justice as exacted by Henry I (a good example of the arbitrary power of the king). No person was to have a bow, arrows, or dogs within a royal forest, and no wood was to be given or sold from any woods within a royal forest, except wood taken for the owner’s use. In each county with a royal forest there should be chosen twelve knights to keep the venison and vert and four knights for agisting¹³ the woods and collecting pannage (the fee payable for putting pigs on the forest in October). The Pipe Roll of 1185 provides considerable evidence that the forest laws were enforced: one township failed in the compulsory attendance at forest pleas and was fined one hundred shillings for the omission.¹⁴

By the time of King John’s accession to the throne in 1199, there were 69 royal forests, and it has been estimated that the legal limits within which the Forest laws applied, covered one-fourth of the land of England. In the early part of his reign John spent much of his time abroad, but when in England he enjoyed hunting in the forests of Sherwood, Rockingham, Essex and Clarendon; and it was from

these forests that Henry III usually made presents of deer to his friends. The barons led the protests against the extent of the forests and the severity of the forest laws but although many promises were made to reduce the areas subject to forest law few were honoured other than when exemptions were agreed on payment of a substantial fine. Many foresters in charge of the day-to-day management of the forest were accused of abusing their powers to the detriment of the commoners.

Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest

When opposition to King John’s misrule came to a head in 1215, the forest figured prominently among the grievances which the barons presented to him. Probably warned of trouble brewing over his forest policy, John backed off from the harshness that had characterised the sentences passed down in the forest courts, and attempted to bring the minor tyrannies of the royal foresters under control. Chapter 48 of Magna Carta provided that: ‘All evil customs, of forests...are immediately to be investigated in each and every county by twelve sworn knights...and within forty days of the inquiry are to be entirely abolished’.¹⁵

Little, however, happened and it took another two years of negotiation with both King John, and William Marshal, the Earl of Pembroke, acting as Regent on behalf of the ten year old Henry III, before an acceptable separate charter for the forest would be published. Following the death of King John in October 1216, Magna Carta was reissued, but with some amendments including the omission of Chapters 47 (all forests made in King John’s time to be disafforested) and 48 (see above), leaving only Chapter 44 which referred to forests (men residing outside the forest, not being required to come before justices of the forest). Magna Carta was issued again in 1217,

this time with the three forest chapters, Chapters 44, 47, and 48 of the 1215 version, omitted, but within a few days the separate Charter of the Forest was issued.

Issued on the 6th November 1217, the Charter of the Forest has seventeen chapters:

One & Three

The barons were successful in having the extent of the forests reined back. All forests created by Richard I and John, ‘are to be disafforested at once’. Those forests created by Henry II were to be inspected, and any woods he afforested, except his own demesne woods, were also to be disafforested. The requirement to first inspect Henry’s woods was probably due to his claim that in several cases he was only re-afforesting woods which had been lost in the anarchy of Stephen’s reign.

Four

Any persons who had a wood within a forest at the time of the coronation of Henry II were relieved of their annual payments to the Exchequer for purprestures (inclosures), wastes or assarts (clearings for cultivation) that had been made in the period from the accession of Henry II to the second year of the reign of Henry III, but any new offences of waste or assart without a licence were to be punished by the usual fines.

Five

Regards, commissions of enquiry into forest offences that had been committed, were based on a series of questions called ‘chapters of the regard’. They were to be held every third year in areas where it had been made before the first coronation of Henry II.¹⁶

Six

One of the first chapters to be enforced was the requirement that dogs belonging to the inhabitants of the forest should have three claws removed from the fore-foot, but ‘lawing’ was to be

confined to those districts where such practice was customary at the accession of Henry II.

Eight

The Swainmote Court was to meet three times a year: A fortnight before the feast of St Michael when the cattle on the forest were agisted, at about the time of the feast of St Martin (11th November) when the fees for pannage were due, and a fortnight before the feast of St John the Baptist shortly before the fawning of the deer. The court of attachments, at which the verderers presided, was to meet every forty days throughout the year to view offences against vert and venison.

Nine

Every free man was to have the right to 'agist his woods within the forest', that is graze his cattle on the forest waste, and to put his pigs on the forest during the pannage month.

Ten

The cruel punishments of mutilation, blinding and castration and even death for poaching the king's deer now ceased. In the future no man should lose life or limb for taking venison. 'He shall be fined unless he cannot pay, in which case he will be imprisoned for a year and a day. Then he may be released if he can find sureties. If not, he must abjure the realm'.

Twelve

The right of every free man to make a mill, fishpond, dam, marlpit, ditch, or arable land outside the covert on arable land in his own wood or land was restored, provided that his action did not harm a neighbour.

Thirteen

On his arrival from Normandy, William had converted into a royal prerogative the right of reserving for himself the eyries of the fowl of the forest – hawks, falcons, eagles and herons – and

the wild honey found in the woods. The Charter renounced these claims. The high prices which were paid for the birds used in hawking, and the extensive use made of honey and wax, gave much importance to this concession.

Fifteen

A pardon was granted to those who had been outlawed for a forest offence since the time of Henry II. They were to be released without legal proceedings, but were required to find reliable pledges that they would do no wrong in future in respect of the forest.

Sixteen

This chapter sought to deal with the abuse of power and corruption by some foresters in exacting illegal fines for their own personal profit. The Charter provided that in future no warden of a castle or anyone else may hold forest pleas. A forester-in-fee (a forester who held office for life) who makes attachments must present them to the verderers, who would enrol them and present them to the chief forester when he came to hold forest pleas (at the Court of the Justice Seat), when the offences would be determined.

Seventeen

Under the final chapter of the charter, the king granted to all persons the liberties of the forest and free customs they previously had within forests and without. All must observe the liberties and customs granted in the charter.

Notwithstanding the concessions, the remaining laws were strictly enforced by the forest officials and offenders punished with substantial fines, depending on the king's immediate need to finance his foreign adventures.

Eight months were to pass after the issue of the Charter, before the Council of Regency ordered the sheriffs in each

county to appoint four 'lawful and discreet' knights, who were to elect 12 of the 'most lawful and discreet knights' in the county. They were to make perambulations, distinguishing between those districts which ought to remain in the forest, and those which ought to be put out. The sheriff was to send the record to the king.

The Second Issue of the Charter of the Forest 1225

Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest were re-issued on 11th February 1225 with one important addition, that in return for the king granting the liberties contained in the charters, the barons, knights and freeholders would pay a fine of a fifteenth part of the value of all their movables. Henry had an urgent need to raise money in order to save Gascony which had been overrun by Hugh de Lusignan. Some £40,000, or well over £21 million today (See End Note 9), was raised from the tax and an army was despatched under the earl of Salisbury and the king's younger brother, Richard, now sixteen and beginning his long political career. The expedition was successful and Gascony remained in English hands until 1453.¹⁷

Within five days of the second issue of the Charter of the Forest, Hugh de Neville and eight other commissioners were appointed to supervise the making of another set of perambulations. They were to be made in each Forest county by an elected jury of 12 knights, two or more knights nominated by the Crown, and the foresters-of-fee and verderers. Woods, however, were not to be felled or venison taken on account of any perambulation until it had been made and presented to the king, and he had given such orders as should seem good to him and his council.¹⁸ The earliest known perambulation of the forest of Essex under the Charter is that of 1224/5, which left the south-west corner of the county within

the bounds of the forest as the largest area of royal forest. In addition there were the king's demesne woods at Colchester (Kingswood), Hatfield, Writtle and Havering.

In February 1227 Henry III declared himself to be of legal age and proceeded to cancel charters granted during his minority. Although there is no evidence that he cancelled the Charter of the Forest, he did, nevertheless reopen the extent of the forests. The effect in Essex was another perambulation in 1228 that was to restore most of the areas declared disafforested in 1225 which had restricted the forest to the south-west of the county and the king's demesne lands.

Financial difficulties compelled Henry III in 1237 and 1253 to issue confirmations of the Charter of the Forest in return for aid from the barons, but the confirmations were never followed by fresh perambulations. In 1238 he ordered the Charter to be read out in full in every county court, and the concessions contained therein to be observed; but he was careful to add the proviso that 'if any dispute or doubt arise regarding the articles of the Charter' the Chief Justice of the Forest was to 'seek the counsel of the King and his Court before anything be done in regard thereto'.¹⁹

It is not known when forest inquisitions started but the earliest surviving record of one in Essex is in 1238:

On the Sunday next after the feast of St Osihe [6 June 1238] in the 22 year of the reign of King Henry, Simon son of Norman was going through his bailiwick of Kingswood (near Colchester), and he saw there full sixteen men on foot and two on horseback with bows and arrows; and as soon as ever he saw them he raised the cry upon them. And immediately afterwards the two men on horseback came, and assaulted

him and beat him and wounded him. And afterwards the aforesaid sixteen men on foot came and took away from him his horn and his sword, his bit and his surcingle (girth for a horse). And when the aforesaid Simon had escaped from their hands he went to seek the verderers; and immediately they came with men of the neighbourhood and sought those aforesaid men in the aforesaid forest, and they could not find them. And afterwards the foresters and verderers assembled for the purpose of better certifying the justices of the forest on their coming. And they made an inquisition by four townships, to wit, Dedham, Boxsted (sic), Ardleigh, and Langham, who say that at present they know nothing; but they will use great diligence in inquiring into this.²⁰

At five other forest inquisitions held in Essex between December 1239 and September 1242, two found nothing to enable an attachment of offenders to be made, although in one case persons from the four townships were required to attend before the justices of the forest at the next pleas to certify the deer which was found dead. Another inquisition found much information with regard to people and places, and one person was 'suspected', but no outcome is known.²¹

The use of the forest for patronage by the king included both the barons and the gentry. In December 1238 an instruction was sent to the sheriff of Essex under the order of the king, to take alive 120 bucks and does in the forest of Essex for the use of the count of Flanders, and that they be carried in carts to the Thames, and to cause Reynold Ruffus, the king's yeoman, to have a ship to carry them to Flanders.²²

Lower down the social scale licences were granted to individ-

uals to hunt animals other than deer and wild boar. In April 1252 a 'licence was granted for life to William Gernum [Gernon] to course through the forest of Essex the hare, fox and cat and take them with his own dogs, except in warrens of the king and others: on condition that he take none of the king's deer'.²³ Another licence in April 1253, included a different condition: 'Grant for life to Walter de Bibbesworth, a knight,²⁴ that he may course with three greyhounds the fox and cat through the forest of Essex, except in warrens; and that he be not made sheriff, coroner, escheator (officer dealing with property on the death of a tenant without heirs), verderer, forester or regarder'.²⁵

In the autumn of 1297 Edward I confirmed Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest (by letters patent dated 12th October 1297 which quoted in full the charter of 1225). This was the first issue to be officially enrolled on the 'Statute Roll' of the royal chancery.²⁶

The Arguments over the extent of Royal Forests continue

On the king's return from Flanders in 1298, his argument with the barons was renewed. New perambulations were promised but Edward reserved his right to challenge the results of any regard. In 1299 and 1300 groups of justices were commissioned to conduct perambulations of forests in a total of 23 counties. A perambulation in Essex in 1301 restricted the royal forest to a slightly different area of the south-west of the county than in 1225, and also left the king's demesne woods as forest.²⁷

In March 1300 Parliament met at Westminster at which the king agreed to a full *inspeximus* (inspection) of Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest. This confirmed that the original 1225 issues of the charters had been inspected and were to be repeated word-for-word in the new issues, with no chapters

omitted. The *inspeximus*, the last with full exemplification, was confirmed by new charters issued on 28th March 1300. It was also the last occasion on which Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest were officially sealed by a king and distributed to each of the thirty or so shires of England.²⁸

Arguments continued about the results of the recent perambulations, but in the end the King gave way, and in February 1301, Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest were confirmed again at Lincoln, by Letters-patent, but without the full wording of the Charters:

Edward by the grace of God king of England...Know that as we have granted and confirmed and renewed by our own charter the great charter of the lord Henry formerly king of England, our father, on the liberties of England along with the charter of the forest, and have ordered those charters to be kept and firmly observed in every one of their articles, we will and grant for us and our heirs that if any statutes are contrary to the said charters or to any article contained in those same charters, they shall be emended by the common counsel of our realm in due fashion, or even annulled. In witness of which thing we have had made these our letters patent. Witness myself at Lincoln the 14th day of February in the 29th year of our reign [1301].²⁹

During the reign of Edward II (1307–27), his unpopular favourites were placed at the head of the forest administration, with the result that many innocent people were convicted by means of irregular and unlawful procedures. The accession of Edward III in 1327 was a turning point with a more conciliatory policy regarding the forest, but this was to lead to the decline in

importance of the royal forests in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

On his accession in 1461 Edward IV was clearly determined to restore the Forest. The authority of the verderers, like that of the coroners, had ended with the previous reign, so the king sent out orders to the sheriffs to make arrangements for the election of ‘as many verderers as there ought to be’ in 19 forests south of Trent, and in Sherwood north of it, ‘as no verderer is as yet elected therein by command of the King’. Nevertheless the Forest fell into the background of national history.³⁰

Decline of the Royal Forests

At the Court of the Justice Seat held at Waltham Holy Cross (Fig. 2), Essex, in 1489, juries attended only from the hundreds of Becontree and Ongar and the half hundred of Waltham,³¹ plus four men and the reeves from 17 forest townships – the royal forest of Essex had become limited to the south-west of the county, together with the outliers at Hatfield, Writtle, Havering and Kingswood (Colchester), which were originally land in the king’s demesne. The forest now became known as Waltham Forest. The court rolls include long lists of presentments for offences against the vert and venison. Among the offenders was William Goldyng, of Loughton, who was a common catcher of fowls of warren within the forest, but the greatest number of charges were laid against Christopher Stubbes, also from Loughton, a yeoman, who cut down and sold timber and wood without a licence.³²

Writtle seems to be excluded from the forest by 1250 when Isabella de Brus claimed liberties under the King’s grant. The perambulation of 1641 showed Havering as outside the forest having become a liberty separate from Becontree Hundred. Kingswood remained in the forest until the reign of Henry VIII who for the sum of £100 granted it to the bailiffs and commonalty

as part of the liberty of the town of Colchester.³³

Originally the king was the owner of the deer in Hatfield Forest as well as lord of the manor in many parishes. However, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the manorial and forestal rights changed hands on several occasions. Edward II bestowed Hatfield on his own sister Elizabeth, who had married Humphrey de Bohun. This time the king parted not only with the manor but also with part of the forestal rights. There were to be more changes of ownership but in 1446, Henry VI relinquished the forestal rights to Humphrey Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, and thereby brought an end to Hatfield’s history as a royal forest.³⁴

There were attempts to revive the forest system in the Tudor and Stuart periods, and of course one of Henry VIII’s favourite pastimes was hunting in his royal forests. The main objective was to revive the forest law and to ensure that offenders were brought before the courts, and to reduce the lawlessness that was widespread across the country. The Tudors also turned to the common law courts to enforce their forest rights. The Crown started assessing the royal forests, not so much as hunting preserves but as sources of timber, especially for shipbuilding for the Navy. 1547 Henry VIII appointed two Masters and Surveyors of the Woods, as officers of the Court of Augmentations. After the Court was absorbed into the Exchequer in 1554, that part of the Crown revenues was managed by ‘Surveyors-General of Woods, Forests, Parks and Chases’, responsible to the Exchequer.³⁵ During the next two reigns the decline of the Forest administration continued, despite the fact that Elizabeth was herself an ardent follower of the chase.

At the pleas of the forest held on 21st September 1630, the forest boundaries were again laid down in practical accordance

with the perambulation of 1301, but the arguments continued, the objective being that Charles I could raise money from landowners who compounded for their afforested lands.³⁶ In September 1641, a Forest Inquisition held at Stratford Langthorne was attended by 15 Commissioners, 24 gentlemen and one Esquire, together with the Steward of the Forest, the Regarders of the Forest, and a number of foresters and rangers of the Purlieu, those areas adjoining the forest which had previously been within the forest, but which were not entirely discharged from the rights of the Crown. They were to make a perambulation of the Forest of Essex (Waltham Forest). The boundaries laid down followed very closely those of the perambulation of 1301, with the exclusion of the 'outliers'.³⁷

By the end of the eighteenth century the monarch had lost interest in hunting, and the Office for Woods decided to offer for sale the forestal rights in all the remaining royal forests. Hainault Forest, in which the Crown owned both the forestal and manorial rights, was ploughed up and sold as farmland. Soon after, the fight to save Epping Forest from enclosure began and was to last until 1878 before an Act of Parliament protected the remaining fragment of the once great Forest of Essex.

The Legacy

The main purpose of the Charter of the Forest was to force the king to disafforest areas that might well have been up to a quarter or even a third of all forests that existed in 1217. In addition the Charter provided common rights for common people and put the royal forests under the law of the land instead of arbitrary decrees previously issued by the king. The Charter of the Forest was seen as legitimising customary rights and over centuries was cited in campaigns to uphold these rights.

The Charter of the Forest granted only part of the benefits



2. Norman columns in the nave of Waltham Abbey, Essex, built in the early twelfth century. (Author's collection)

hoped for in 1215. The extraordinary jurisdiction of the forest remained. The inhabitants were still oppressed by hateful burdens, subject to irksome restrictions, and liable to heavy collective fines. But a good number of the evil customs from which they suffered, and from which the Great Charter of 1215 had vaguely promised to free them, were now suppressed by law, and above all, some of them could look forward to the disafforestation of their land and a return to normal conditions. Henceforth the English could look to appeal to a legal document.³⁸

The alienation of so huge an area of land from national uses and national liberties remained for hundreds of years a source of constant bickering between the king and his subjects. However, as the complicated medieval system of land tenure gave way to more modern notions of private property, and access to common land was threatened by so-called enclosure, more areas were taken out of the royal forests in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by sale of the forestal rights to the local gentry and noble families, and the administrative and judicial system began to crumble.

One of the principal arguments used in the campaign to save Epping Forest from enclosure was the claim by the commoners that they had the right to graze their cattle over the length and breadth of the forest – the so called right of intercommonage – a right that they had enjoyed over time immemorial. It could be claimed that chapter 9 of the Charter of the Forest 1217, confirmed this right.

The Charter of the Forest ceased to have effect in this country when the Wild Creatures and Forest Laws Act was passed in 1971. The only remaining vestige of the royal forest system is the office of verderer which continues in the New Forest, Forest of Dean and Epping Forest, although their role today is much changed.

Original copies of the 1217 Charter of the Forest still exist, one in the archives of Lincoln Cathedral, the other in Durham Cathedral. The 1217 Charter was issued in the name of the king, but with the seals of Cardinal Guala, the Papal Legate, and William Marshal, the Earl of Pembroke, acting as Regent of the kingdom and protector of Henry III who was only ten years old in 1217, and had no seal during the first two years of his reign. Both copies still have the seal of Cardinal Guala attached, but that of William Marshal is now missing.

References

1. Transcript of programme originally broadcast on BBC Radio 4, in December 2006: *The Things We Forget To Remember: Magna Carta*, presented by Michael Portillo. www.open2.net/thingsweforgot/magna_carta.html.
2. D. Carpenter, *The Struggle for Mastery, Britain 1066-1284* (London, 2003), pp.26, 34.
3. Ibid, p.77.
4. Ibid, p.2.
5. A few boundary stones still exist, e.g. one in Whalebone Lane, manor of Dagenham, but they are unlikely to be original medieval marks of the forest boundary.

6. J. Manwood, *Treatise of the Forest Lawes* (London, 1665), pp.40-1.
7. R. Morris, *The Verderers and Courts of Waltham Forest in the County of Essex, 1250-2000* (Loughton, 2004), p.17.
8. A. Williams & G.H. Martin (Eds), *Domesday Book: a complete translation* (London, 1992), p.972.
9. It is difficult to give an exact modern worth of 500 marks (£330). The National Archive's Currency Converter (which only calculates currency from 1270) gives its 2005 value as £175,797. www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency, (14/08/2017).
10. W. Liddell, 'The Bounds of the Forest of Essex', in K. Neale (Ed), *An Essex Tribute, Essays presented to Frederick G. Emmison* (London, 1987), p.110.
11. *The Great Roll of the Pipe, 22 Henry II*, XXV, (1175-6) (London, 1904), pp.8, 75.
12. J.C. Holt, 'The Assizes of Henry II: the Texts', in D.A. Bullough & R.L. Storey (Eds), *The Study of Medieval Records: Essays in Honour of Kathleen Major* (Oxford, 1971), pp.97-8.
13. Agisters were responsible for overseeing the grazing of cattle and pigs in the forest and with collecting the rents charged for pasturage. They were assisted in this by the parish Reeves.
14. *The Great Roll of the Pipe, 31 Henry II*, XXXIV, (1185) (London, 1913), p.193.
15. H. Rothwell, (Ed), *English Historical Documents, 1189-1327* (London, 1975), p.316.
16. G.J. Turner, (ed), *Select Pleas of the Forest* (London, 1901), pp.lxxv-lxxxvii.
17. Carpenter, p.307.
18. *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, (1216-25), p.575 & Turner, p.xcvii.
19. *Close Rolls of Henry III*, (1237-42), (London, 1911), p.22.
20. British Library, translation of item in Add Ms 28404, in Turner, p.69.
21. Turner, pp.70-4.
22. *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls, Henry III*, (1226-40) (London, 1916), p.354.
23. *Calendar of Patent Rolls of Henry III*, (1247-58) (London, 1908), p.133.
24. Walter de Bibbesworth, 1235-70, was a knight and Anglo-Norman poet. Although he held land at Kimpton in Hertfordshire (known today as Bibbsworth Hall), he was buried at Little Dunmow in Essex.
25. *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, (1247-58), p.187.
26. N. Vincent, *Magna Carta: Origins and Legacy* (Oxford, 2015), p.14.
27. Liddell, p.111.
28. Durham Cathedral, Oriel College, Oxford, and the Borough of Sandwich, Kent (Cinque Port), have copies of this issue of both Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest. Vincent, pp.82, 252, 269.
29. Rothwell, p.512.
30. *Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward IV* (1461-8) (London, 1949), pp.43-5.
31. Parts of Becontree Hundred and the Hundred of Ongar were outside the Forest. The perambulations of 1301 and 1641 give details of the towns within and outside the Forest.
32. The National Archives, DL 39/2/23-27, File of Waltham forest eyre, 22/08/1488 to 21/08/1489.
33. W.R. Fisher, *The Forest of Essex* (London, 1887), pp.16-18.
34. O. Rackham, *The Last Forest, the Story of Hatfield Forest* (London, 1989), 70-2.
35. R. Grant, *The Royal Forests of England* (Gloucester, 1991), p.184.
36. J. Nisbet, 'Forestry', p.619 in W. Page & J.H. Round, *The Victoria History of the County of Essex*, II (London, 1907).
37. Fisher, pp.400-3.
38. C. Petit-Dutaillis, *Studies and Notes supplementary to Stubbs Constitutional History of England* (Manchester, 1930), p.198.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Dr Jennifer Ward for comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

The Author

Richard Morris has held the office of *Verderer of Epping Forest* since 1998, when his interest in the history of the royal forest of Essex began. He was hon. secretary of Loughton & District Historical Society for ten years, and has written a number of books all of which have an Essex link.

Rev Dr Foote Gower:

a forgotten Essex antiquary and field archaeologist

by

Michael Leach

Sober-suited be thy Trim,
Thy waxen Taper blazing dim,
To cast around a serious Gloom,
And glimmer in the silent Tomb;
Where repose the pompous Dead,
Where the mighty lay their Head¹

The Reverend Foote Gower (Fig. 1) is a name almost unknown to those interested in the history of Essex, though he lived and worked in the county for the last 20 years of his life as parish priest, physician and antiquary. The purpose of this article is to shed some light on his varied careers, particularly as a topographer and a correspondent with some of the most eminent antiquaries of his time.

Early life

Foote Gower, the oldest son of the Rev Foote Gower, a physician of Chester, was baptised on 1st June 1726 in the church of St John the Baptist, Chester. Nothing is known of his youth or education until he matriculated at Brasenose College, Oxford in 1744. Here he graduated BA in 1747 and proceeded to MA (1750), MB (1755) and MD 1757. He was elected a fellow of the college in 1750. In 1751 his poem 'To Melancholy' appeared in an anthology published in Oxford to mark the death in that year of George II's oldest son, Frederic, prince of Wales. His rather laboured offering, one verse of which heads this article, ran to ten more and was, perhaps wisely, Gower's only venture into published poetry.²

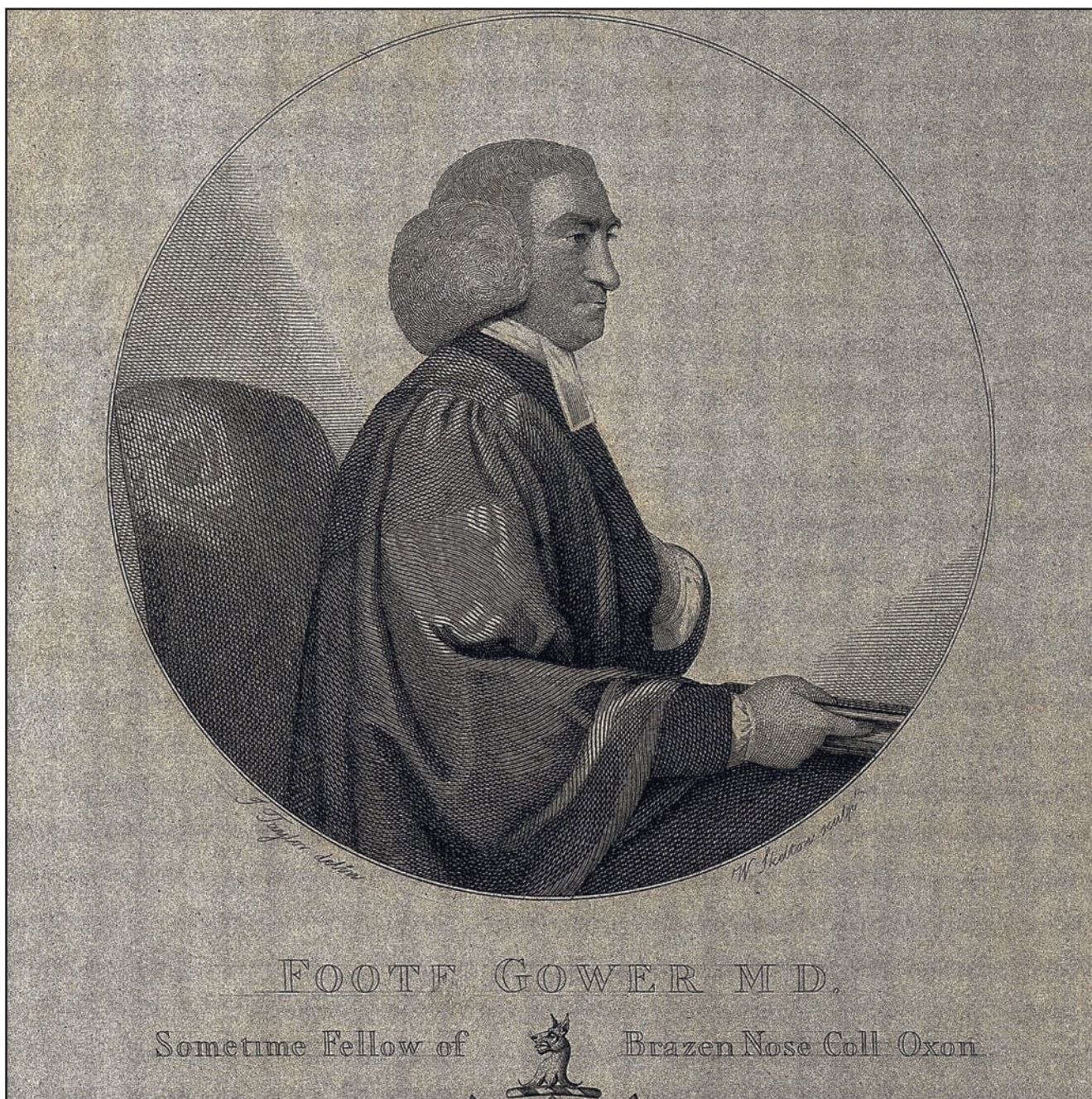
The clergyman

In 1761 he was granted the living of Chignal St James, the advowson being owned by his brother-in-law. This living was combined with Mashbury after a successful petition for the amalgamation of two parishes in 1766 and Gower held both parishes until 1777.³ Though he must have been busy developing his medical practice, as well as his antiquarian interests, he did make a number of improvements to the church at Chignal St James in 1767. These included removing the screen and the gallery, and separating and relocating the pulpit and reading desk. He installed painted glass in the east window, acquired second hand in Rayleigh. This depicted the kneeling Augustus Caesar, with the Tiburtine Sybil pointing to the Virgin Mary with child, and was illustrated in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1786. In the west window he placed some armorial glass; the Mildmay arms from Terling Hall and another achievement from 'an alehouse in Roxwell'. An anonymous writer, reporting these changes in 1786, commented 'though Dr Gower was a zealous antiquary, he did not consider the confusion such a translation of coats of arms etc. from one church to another in very distant parts of the county

would make in the observations of future church-noters'.⁴

The east window (Fig. 2) was removed early in the twentieth century and the fate of this, as well as the armorial glass in the west window, is not known. The church was made redundant in 1981 and has since been converted into a private house. Mashbury church is also now privately owned.

Little can be gleaned about his ministry, though the parish registers for Chignal St James are neatly completed in his distinctive hand. He responded to an Episcopal enquiry in 1763 about the catechizing of children at Mashbury, and his reply was short and to the point; 'the children cannot read, and therefore are not catechized'.⁵ In 1769 he was described as 'Chaplain to the Earl of Oxford' though nothing further is known about this appointment.⁶ The rector of Ingatestone, who died in 1770, referred to Gower in his will as 'his worthy Friend' and mentioned 'the friendly intercourse that has long subsisted between us'. He directed that Gower should conduct his funeral service if his brother was unable to perform the ceremony, and that he should be given first option on an advowson.



1 Foote Gower M.D. Line engraving by W. Skelton, after J. Taylor.
(Wellcome Library, London (library ref: ICV No. 2535), copyrighted work
available under Creative Commons Attributions only licence CC BY 4.0)

However this may have reflected a personal friendship rather than a measure of the merits of Gower's pastoral qualities.⁷

The physician

The patron of the combined parishes was John Strutt MP, whose sister Elizabeth had married Gower in October 1757.⁸ His marriage would have required the resignation of his Oxford fellowship necessitating his move to Essex to obtain a suitable living, and to establish his medical practice. In 1769 he

added the living of Woodham Walter to his responsibilities, but he probably did not reside in any of these parishes as he was a tenant of Guy Harlings, Chelmsford for a number of years.⁹ It has been questioned whether he practiced as a physician, but there is good evidence that he did. The *London Chronicle*, reporting his marriage in 1757 described him as a 'Physician at Chelmsford.' In an undated letter to an unknown correspondent, he wrote 'Mr Tysson of Hanover Square has earnestly desired me

to save his life which, he says, I did some years ago. This I will endeavour to do and will set out for his house early tomorrow morning'.¹⁰ When he was invited to the opening of a lead coffin which had been exhumed in Danbury church in October 1779, he was described by a contemporary as 'an eminent physician and antiquary'. Further evidence of his medical practice is found in his son's obituary in which he is described as 'a clergyman and a physician of eminence'.¹¹

The antiquary

There is nothing to indicate how Gower's interest in antiquities developed but he became part of an important circle of antiquarians (which included Richard Gough, Edward Haistwell and Michael Tyson) who had first met as undergraduates at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and maintained a regular correspondence with each other. Michael Tyson was probably the 'Mr Tysson of Hanover Square' whose life Gower was asked to save. Tyson, after various ecclesiastical preferments in other counties, was appointed rector of Lambourne, not far from Chelmsford, in 1776, a living which he held till his death in 1780. Another of the Corpus Christi group was Benjamin Forster (1736–1806), a member of the Walthamstow family of antiquaries and botanists. Forster acted as curate in various Essex parishes, including Chignal Smealy which adjoined Foote Gower's own parish; both men were planning to have a meeting with Gough in the summer of 1765.¹²

Gower's connection with Richard Gough was particularly strong. They exchanged letters several times a month between 1765 and 1775 and one of Gough's letters dated March 1767 indicates that he was intending to put forward Gower's name for election as fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. He was duly elected, on the same day as Michael Tyson, in June 1768. Gough supplied Gower with London booksellers' catalogues, and purchased large numbers of books for him – primarily historical, topographical and antiquarian works, with a few titles in theology and medicine. Gower suggested that together they should view Essex antiquities (though few, if any, such expeditions seem to have materialised), and sent him notes and sketches concerning local objects of interest, such as the porches at Runwell church. He even asked Gough, in December 1766,

to pay the tenths on his two Essex livings to the office in the Temple. He seems to have shared Gough's poor opinion of Philip Morant, noting on 10 November 1766 'that fellow Morant will cheat me into the Purchase of his Book' and asked Gough to obtain the Hinkford Hundred section of the Essex historian's work bound in 'boards covered with blue paper', rather than the standard but more expensive full calf binding.¹³

Other evidence from the correspondence with Gough suggests that Gower was much more than a dilettante antiquary. He exposed the flaws in the etymologies in Hutchins's *History and Antiquities of Dorset*. He had serious reservations about Edward Lye's Anglo-Saxon dictionary of 1772 which he felt would have been more useful, and more accurate, if it had been translated into English rather than Latin. It is evident that Gough respected Gower's knowledge of Anglo-Saxon, as in one of his letters he sought his advice on the best grammar to use.¹⁴

The first evidence of Gower's interest in antiquities appears in his manuscript history of the parish of Chignal St James. Though the authorship has been incorrectly attributed to an unidentified Rev Dr Thomas Gower in the Essex Record Office catalogue these notes were written in Foote Gower's own distinctive hand. Further confirmation, if any is needed, comes from the interest shown in Roman roads and Anglo-Saxon etymology. The vellum bound volume, faintly titled on the front cover '1761 Chignal St James Memorabilia' starts with a neatly ruled table giving details of the local farms, their tenants and their liability for poor rate, land tax and commuted tithe. In the back of the volume is a similar table for Mashbury. Succeeding rectors updated this information till about 1826 and it would have been very useful for collecting the parish dues. Apart from a sketch map, which appears to show the

glebe fields in Mashbury, the rest of the MS concerns the history of Chignal St James. The manorial descent, and the identification of the site of the lost church of Chignal St Mary, are very similar to the account in Morant's History, and it is difficult to establish if one copied the other as the precise dates of compilation of each cannot be established. It is also possible that both had drawn on the same unidentified source.¹⁵

Roman roads and field archaeology

Where Gower differed from his contemporary antiquaries was in his interest in identifying Roman roads through field archaeology. It is clear from his account of Chignal St James that he had combined the observations that he had made in 1762 with a study of field and place-names, and had established what he believed to be a Roman road from Pleshey to Billericay, including lengths of surviving agger on the section between Stock and Billericay. He thought he had found another road from Danbury to Ongar, running past the now lost earthworks at Blunt's Wall which he believed to be a Roman station. He did not provide a map but some of the landmarks that he described can be identified on Chapman and André's map of 1777, and his observations should not necessarily be dismissed. A major villa was identified in Chignal St James in 1975 and modern authorities recognise that the road from Billericay to Stock (where Gower noticed the agger) is of Roman origin, though its destination after Stock is not known.¹⁶

In the early autumn of 1765 Gower spent three weeks investigating the Roman town at Great Chesterford in northwest Essex, and its surrounding network of ancient roads. His findings were recorded in a letter dictated by him to Rev Benjamin Forster and, nearly a century later, printed in the journal of the

British Archaeological Association. Antiquarians had been interested in this site since William Stukeley's visit in 1719 and the inhabitants must have grown accustomed to inquisitive visitors. Gower interviewed a number of local people who had dug up coins, buried walls, urns, fragments of gold and tessellated pavements. During his visit, he rescued from a blacksmith the base of a large octagonal monument, decorated with the heads and torsos of various deities. On 25th September 1765 Richard Gough noted that 'this trough' was to 'arrive in due time in Chelmsford'. In 1803, more than 20 years after Gower's death, it found its way into the British Museum.¹⁷

Gower made use of crop marks as a means of identifying buried structures on archaeological sites. One of his Chesterford informants claimed to have found the site of the amphitheatre from a noticeable circle in which the 'corn grew very thin'. Gower himself observed traces of streets, as well as the east and west entrances to the camp, from parch marks in the crop. Most of his time was spent tracing remains of ancient roads to the north, east and west of Chesterford. On several of these he identified a prominent 'agger', and one road was marked by the 'dying away of the corn in a long strait track'. Though Forster had included with his letter a sketch map of the roads that Gower had noted, Roach Smith, writing some 85 years later, considered it difficult or impossible to identify them with any certainty.¹⁸

Interest in Roman Britain had steadily grown from the beginning of the eighteenth century, stimulated by the discoveries of the remains of roads, military camps, sculptures, inscriptions and mosaic floors. The most influential printed work, which remained a standard work into the following century, was John Horsley's *Britannia Romana*, published in three volumes, a year after his death in 1732. The

author who was a non-conformist minister in Northumberland claimed to have travelled over 1,000 miles to collect material for his work. However by 1768, Richard Gough noted that it 'might be greatly enlarged from later discoveries'. It seems likely that Gough himself had started gathering material for a new edition, and that he had encouraged Gower's involvement in the preparation of a revised edition.¹⁹ The updated work was never completed or published – indeed there is no evidence to show how far the project progressed – but Gower's involvement must be seen a measure of the high regard in which he was held as a scholar and antiquary.

The county historian

His exploration of Chesterford was probably intended to gather material for this second edition, but he also had plans to produce his own book, *Essexia Romana*, a title clearly derived from Horsley's work. In 1767 he had employed the artist Joseph Strutt (a distant relation by marriage) to engrave a plate of a Roman 'quietorium' found at Chesterford and further commissions for *Essexia Romana* followed. Strutt was busy on sketches of the 'Roman earthworks' at Great Canfield in the summer of 1770. In July of that year Gower wrote to Richard Gough, informing him that he hoped the first part of this work, including the history of Pleshey with Strutt's illustrations, would be ready to go to press during the winter. This never happened, though Gough may have acquired this material, as well as a number of Strutt's unsigned plates, for publication in his own *History and Antiquities of Pleshey* which was published in 1803, long after Gower's death.²⁰

At some point Gower decided either to expand *Essexia Romana* into a more general history of the county, or to produce an entirely separate work covering the post-Roman period. Richard Gough noted that 'the late herald

Warburton's collections are in the hands of Dr Gower of Chelmsford, who proposed supplying the defects of the last history, but is now fully engaged in that of his native county' and Gower himself confirmed his ownership of the Warburton MSS for Essex and Cheshire.²¹ Gough's reference to the 'defects of the last history' reflects his well-known criticisms of Morant's *History of Essex*. In 1771 and 1772 Gower intermittently employed Strutt (regrettably without paying him) to prepare illustrations for an expanded history of Essex.²² A manuscript of 231 leaves in the Bodleian Library has material collected by Gower relating to the county, consisting largely of drawings of earthworks, castles, ecclesiastical monuments and painted glass.²³ What is surprising is that while he was continuing to collect Essex material, he had begun to work on a much more ambitious history of his native county, Cheshire.

In 1771 he published anonymously *A Sketch of the Materials for a New History of Cheshire, in a Letter to Thomas Falconer*. This was printed by Lionel Hassell of Chelmsford and the prospectus listed the large number of manuscripts which he either already owned, or he had been promised access to. The estimated cost of this ambitious project was the enormous sum of £3,000; it was to be in two volumes folio, and individual subscriptions of between six and ten guineas were solicited. In comparison, Morant's two volumes of the *History of Essex* bound in calf, cost £4 14s 6d.²⁴ Gower had already spent over 50 guineas in engraving copies a number of manuscripts (and was willing to contribute another 50 guineas worth), and his aim was to provide an account of the county which could be read with pleasure, rather than a work intended for occasional antiquarian reference. His intention seems to have been to obtain 200 subscribers and then to form an 'Antiquarian Association' to compile the work

because 'I have not, I fear, a Sufficiency of Health or Leisure, much less Abilities, for this very arduous Task'.²⁵ It is, perhaps, not surprising that he failed to get the support that he sought, and the issue of a second prospectus in the following year met with an equal lack of success. A third attempt in 1775 promised three volumes in folio, each to be 'embellished with at least 20 folio copper plates'. Hopes that it would still be published lingered on, but five years later Gough noted 'we may fairly assume, from the interval that has since elapsed in silence, notwithstanding the repeated challenges that he has received in the St James Chronicle...that the design is laid aside for want of proper encouragement'.²⁶ After Gower's death, his Cheshire manuscripts were sold to Dr J. Wilkinson of London who made another unsuccessful attempt to publish them in 1795 as the work of 'the late Foote Gower MD'. The material then passed to William Latham who, in 1800, republished and added additional notes to Gower's original prospectus. In 1824 Gower's topographical MSS were among those being auctioned from the collection of Daniel Scrace, an attorney of Bath. The majority of the collection was subsequently purchased by the British Museum in 1838, and the remainder (including his Essex MSS) found its way into the Bodleian. Some of his Cheshire material was eventually published by George Ormerod in his 1819 *History of the County Palatine and City of Chester*.²⁷

There is nothing unusual in the failure of antiquarians to achieve the publication of their works due to other demands on their time, the inability to order the evidence collected, or the continuous temptation to add more material. In addition, Gower's proposal for a six to ten guinea subscription for his county history would seem over-ambitious, particularly as he regarded the cost of Morant's



2. Engraving of east window installed by Foote Gower in the east window of Chignal St James. It depicts the mythic meeting between the Tiburtine Sibyl and Augustus Caesar at which he asked the prophetess if he should be worshiped as a god. Giving her reply, she is shown pointing to a vision of the Virgin Mary holding the infant Jesus. The date and origins of this painted glass, and its ultimate fate, are unknown. (Author's collection)

Essex history – at perhaps half that price – to be excessive. Another impediment to achieving publication is revealed in a letter written to him in May 1776 in which the writer commiserates with him over a fire in his house which had resulted in the destruction of some of his papers.²⁸ The fire was probably small, as no report has been found in the *Chelmsford Chronicle*. In the compilation of his history of Essex, he may have also found that John Warburton's manuscript was an unsatisfactory source. One of Warburton's contemporaries, Thomas Tennant, took a very poor view of his scholarship, and noted:

I knew Warburton well. He was the most illiterate man I ever met with. Ignorant not only of the learned and foreign languages, but even of his own...And yet this man has the Art or rather the Cunning to pass

through life with credit and to be spoken of after his death as a man of learning and ingenuity.²⁹

Gower's connection with the Chelmsford printer Lionel Hassall raises the possibility that he succeeded Rev Bate Dudley as author of *The Gentleman's History of Essex*. Hassall appears to have acted as editor, as well as printer, of this work and there is strong evidence for Bate Dudley's authorship for the first volume or two. However, by June 1769, Bate Dudley's task had been transferred to 'a Gentleman well acquainted with the Natural History of this County and every Way qualified for the Undertaking.' As an antiquary with an established reputation, resident in Chelmsford and already known to Hassall, Gower would have been the ideal person to take over this responsibility. Though the possibility seems compelling,

no confirmatory evidence has been found so far.³⁰

Gower's health had begun to deteriorate by 1772 and may explain his resignation from his three livings in 1777. In October 1779, however, he was still well enough to be busy with the 'professional engagements' which prevented his attendance at the Danbury coffin opening.³¹ He died, aged 53, while on a visit to Bath (perhaps for his health) on 27th May 1780 and he was buried in Bath Abbey. His widow Elizabeth outlived him by nearly two decades and is commemorated by a wall tablet in the church of St Germanus at Faulkbourne.³²

Conclusion

It is clear that Gower had a close friendship with Richard Gough, one of the most influential antiquarians of the eighteenth century and the voluminous correspondence between the two men, as well as Gower's Essex manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, deserve more detailed study. He was involved in an ultimately failed project to update the authoritative work by Horsley on Roman Britain, and had accumulated a substantial amount of material for a history of his native county of Chester. In addition he had plans to publish what would probably have been an equally lavish volume on Essex. None of these projects reached fruition, though some of his material was later used by others. In spite of being largely forgotten today, he was a well regarded member of a group of influential antiquaries and deserves to be better known.

References

1. Stanza from Foote Gower's 'To Melancholy' published in Anon (ed), *Epicedia Oxoniensia in obitum Frederici, Principis Walliae* (Oxford, 1751), unpaginated.
2. D. Ben Rees, 'Gower, Foote (1725/6–1780)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11172, (25/09/2017).
3. Essex Record Office (ERO), D/P 352/3, Act of bishop of London uniting benefices of Mashbury and Chignal St James, 1766.
4. G.L. Gomme, *The Gentleman's Magazine Library: English Topography*, pt. 4 (London, 1893) pp. 91–2.
5. W. Page & J.H. Round, *The Victoria History of the County of Essex*, II, (London, 1907), p.77.
6. *Bath Chronicle & Weekly Gazette*, 01/06/1769.
7. E.E. Wilde, *Ingatestone and the Great Essex Road* (Oxford, 1913) p.187.
8. *London Chronicle*, 29/10 to 01/11/1757, p. 418.
9. Ben Rees; H. Grieve, *The Sleepers and the Shadows*, II (Chelmsford, 1994), p. 153.
10. Bodleian Library, MS Don.d.88, letter 66.
11. A. Suckling, *Memorials of the Antiquities & Architecture of the County of Essex* (London, 1845), p. 88; *Annual Biography & Obituary for 1833*, XVII, p.432.
12. R.H. Jeffers, 'The Forsters of Walthamstow', *Essex Journal*, III, 3, pp.119–42; J. Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, V (London, 1828), p.291.
13. British Library (BL), Add MS 22936; *Stamford Mercury*, 16/06/1768.
14. R. Sweet, *Antiquaries: the Discovery of the Past in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 2004), pp.22, 205–7.
15. ERO, D/P 291/28, Manuscript history of the parish, entitled '1761. Chignal St. James. Memorabilia', 1761–1826; P. Morant, *History of Essex*, II (London, 1768), pp. 79–81.
16. C.J. Going, 'The Roman Countryside' in O. Bedwin (Ed), *The Archaeology of Essex* (Chelmsford, 1996), pp. 96, 98.
17. C. Roach Smith, 'In reference to the discoveries at Ickleton and Chesterford' in *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, V, p.54; BL, Add MS 22936; W.R. Powell, *The Victoria History of the County of Essex*, III (London, 1963), p.83.
18. Roach Smith, p.58.
19. BL, Egerton MS 2382, f.60; R. Gough, *Anecdotes of British Topography* (London, 1768), p.6.
20. B.L. Hough, 'A consideration of the antiquarian and literary works of Joseph Strutt' (unpublished PhD. thesis, Queen Mary College, University of London, 1984), p.28.
21. R. Gough, *British Topography*, I (London, 1780), p.45; F. Gower, *A Sketch of Materials for a History of Cheshire* (Chelmsford, 1771), p.59.
22. See Hough pp.28–38 for a discussion of their relationship.
23. Bodleian Library, MS Top.Essex, b.4.
24. ERO D/DPr 569, Correspondence between P. Muilman and Mr Hickford, 1769.
25. Gower, pp.67–71; Sweet, p.6.
26. Gough, p.264.
27. Ben Rees; *Bath Chronicle & Weekly Gazette*, 07/10/1824; BL Add, MSS 11334 & 11338; BL main catalogue entries for Foote Gower; J. Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, VII (London, 1848), pp.407, 436.
28. Cheshire & Chester Archives, D 4784/31.
29. Quoted in T. Woodcock, 'Warburton, John (1682–1759)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28673, (25/09/2017).
30. M. Leach, 'The Gentleman's History of Essex; the enigma of its authorship resolved?', *Essex Journal*, 48, I, pp.9–15; M Leach, 'The Gentleman's History of Essex: a postscript', *Essex Journal*, 48, II, p.41.
31. Suckling, p.88.
32. Ben Rees; www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-115388-parish-church-of-st-germanus-faulkbourne#V915T_krK70, (14/09/2016).

Acknowledgments

To the magnificent resources available at Essex Record Office, the London Library, St James Square, London and the Wellcome Library.

The Author

Michael Leach is a retired general practitioner with a life-long interest in local history and its chroniclers, as well as the lives of his long-deceased professional colleagues.

‘You have gone too far and an apology is needed’: the saga of enlarging St Martin’s, Chipping Ongar, 1880–84

by
James Bettley

There is scarcely a church in Essex that was not restored during the Victorian era, often on more than one occasion. There are many reasons for this, not least the poor condition into which church buildings had been gradually declining since the Reformation; but churches were also restored and enlarged in order to meet the needs of growing or shifting populations, as well as in response to changing perceptions as to what was an appropriate setting for worship. Most restorations included introducing new seating and, where they did not already exist, the addition of one or two aisles alongside the nave. The story of the changes made to St Martin’s, Chipping Ongar, between 1880 and 1884 illustrates the complexities surrounding what might seem now to have been a typical, straightforward Victorian restoration.

The seating arrangements in St Martin’s, as in so many churches in the nineteenth century, were at the heart of the matter. In 1832 a local builder, Richard Noble, drew up plans for new seating.¹

The resulting pews were old-fashioned, with doors, and probably looked like those which survive at Elmstead Market near Colchester. The front rows – eleven on the north side, twelve on the south – are labelled ‘family pews’, and families would have paid rent for the privilege of sitting there. The back rows are ‘free sittings for females’, and in the gallery, at the back, are ‘free sittings for males’.

The front of the galley was occupied by the school, with the ‘singers’ pew’ in the middle, although some of this seating was lost in 1835 when the organ was installed.² It was normal at this time for the singers or choir to be placed in the gallery, together with such musicians as could be mustered. The chancels of English parish churches were originally intended for the sole use of the clergy; it was only in the 1840s that the idea of having surpliced choirs in chancels was introduced, not least so that the singers would be under the control of the vicar rather than doing what they pleased in the gallery.

The seating in St Martin’s was changed in 1860–61, when the church underwent a restoration costing about £700.³ There are one or two pictures of what the church looked like before then: a well-known one was published in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* of 1796 and shows the north side, still with the north porch that was later taken down, and without the vestry that is there now (Fig.1).⁴

Closer in time, and possibly more accurate, is a sketch that was probably made in the 1850s: a view from the south-east which shows the church much as it is today, but without the south aisle, and including the two dormer windows in the nave roof that were no doubt added to provide light for those sitting in the west gallery.⁵ A similar view was painted in watercolour in 1877, while a photographic image of the church was captured at around the same time (Figs.2&3).

It is a very typical little Essex church, and surprisingly modest given the status of Chipping Ongar as a market town with a castle. The simplicity was not just a question of money, because in neighbouring High Ongar, ten times richer as a parish than Chipping Ongar, St Mary’s was equally modest and remarkably similar, until a prominent tower was built in 1858.

The architect for that addition was Edward Swansborough, who was also the architect for the restoration of St Martin’s in 1860–61, so it might be said that Chipping Ongar got off lightly. As it is he added the north vestry (mostly now obscured by an extension of 1917), renewed the stonework of many of the windows, and replaced the seating with the open benches that remain in the church today.⁶ He also, in 1863, reported on the state of the gallery and belfry, which was causing some concern, but nothing seems to have been done at that time.⁷ In 1877 additional space for seating in the gallery was provided by moving the organ to the chancel, where it remained until 1919.⁸ Replacement of box pews with open benches was a standard procedure in the second half of the nineteenth century, which is why survivals such as Elmstead Market’s are so rare; box pews were considered socially divisive, and not conducive to seemly worship. It was also normal to move the organ to the east end of the church, so as to be near the choir. West galleries were usually taken down, but that meant having to find space else-



1. The north side of the church, seen in an engraving published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1796. (Reproduced by courtesy of ERO, I/Mb 262/1/4)

where to accommodate the displaced seating; and, as we shall see, this was an option rejected by the parishioners of St Martin's.

So we come to 1878, and the appointment of a new rector, James Tanner, then about 45 years of age. Tanner had been educated at Pembroke College, Oxford, and having been ordained deacon in 1859 became curate of Bramshall, Staffordshire. From 1862 to 1867 he was an assistant master at Bromsgrove Grammar School, and then in 1867 was appointed headmaster of the Grammar School in Chelmsford, at that time still in the buildings in Duke Street to which the school had moved after the ceiling of the school-house collapsed in 1633, and where it remained until 1892. Like all grammar schools, Chelmsford was going through a period of great change, which would see some of them

(like Brentwood and indeed Bromsgrove) turn into public schools. Tanner's term of office was not a particularly happy one. The number of pupils declined – an average of 51 compared with 60 under his predecessor and 79 in 1867 – which mattered because he was paid between £2 and £4 per pupil in addition to his basic salary of £100 a year. There was disagreement with the governors over use of part of the land, as to whether it was his private garden or a playing field; and there was a suggestion that he failed to control the use of corporal punishment. His resignation, in 1877, was attributed to stress: 'the state of Mr Tanner's health and the demands made upon him by his duties in the school compel him to resign his office of headmaster'.⁹

He was briefly curate-in-charge of Stratford-upon-Avon before being appointed to

Chipping Ongar. It was not, it must be said, a plum job. Although he was the rector, it was not a good living, worth only £168 a year according to the *Clergy Directory* of 1885. Clergy income was generally rather lower in the nineteenth century than many people perhaps think; by 1887, more than a third of parsons had incomes of less than £200, and half less than £300.¹⁰ By many people's standards, of course, this was a lot of money, and a Nonconformist minister would certainly have thought so. But a Church of England parson usually had a large house to keep up, and he was expected to live like a gentleman, with an appropriate number of servants; and as rector he would also have had responsibility for the upkeep of the chancel of his church, as well as subscribing to all the local charities. £168 was less than Tanner had been earning as headmaster of the Grammar School, and he would also have known that the rector of the neighbouring parish, High Ongar, enjoyed an income of nearly £1,400.

A sketch of the building from the north-west shows how it looked when Tanner arrived in the parish (Fig.5).¹¹

The north porch, seen in the 1796 print, has gone; this entrance to the church had been closed off in 1814 and a new entrance, with plain porch, made at the west end. The new windows put in by Edward Swansborough in 1860-61 can be seen, and also his new vestry. A plan of 1883 shows just how simple the building was (Fig 4).¹² In addition to the windows inserted by Swansborough there are a number of very narrow windows, with deep reveals, that are the main evidence for the original Norman church.

Tanner seems to have decided fairly quickly that changes needed to be made to the church. A meeting of parishioners was held in November 1880 at which it was decided to embark upon a

programme of work. Concerns were the state of the walls, roof, and stability of the spire; and the accommodation for the parishioners, i.e. seating. Tanner told the meeting that there were a great number of people who ought to be in the church who did not come there. He did not say that they would be there if the church was enlarged, but certainly they would not come at the present time. There were a large number of families who really ought to have eight or ten sittings a-piece, yet the largest number that could be allotted to any family was five sittings. He had seen crowded into one seat the representatives of three houses, each of whom might expect to have separate sittings in the church. He found several persons who had young and growing families, and he did not see how it was possible for them to bring up their children in church-going habits if they were not able to take them to church accompanied by at least one of their parents. There was seating for only 50 to 60 of what he termed the 'Industrial Class'. The meeting resolved to appoint an architect to look into the matter and report back.¹³

The need for additional seating was fairly plain. The population of Chipping Ongar had risen from 595 in 1801 to 798 in 1831 to 867 in 1861, and in 1881 stood at 992. Meanwhile – and this was often a case made for the urgency of enlarging churches, although it does not seem to have been made at the parish meeting – the Independent chapel had been built in 1833 and enlarged in 1865, and the Roman Catholic church had been built in 1868-9. As was so often the case, the established church seemed to have been slower to respond to the changes in population than the other denominations, and the fear always was that if there was not enough room in the parish church, people would simply go elsewhere. A new spacious building might also have seemed more



2 Watercolour of St Martin's from the south-east, 1877, by an unidentified artist. (Reproduced by courtesy of the rector and churchwardens)

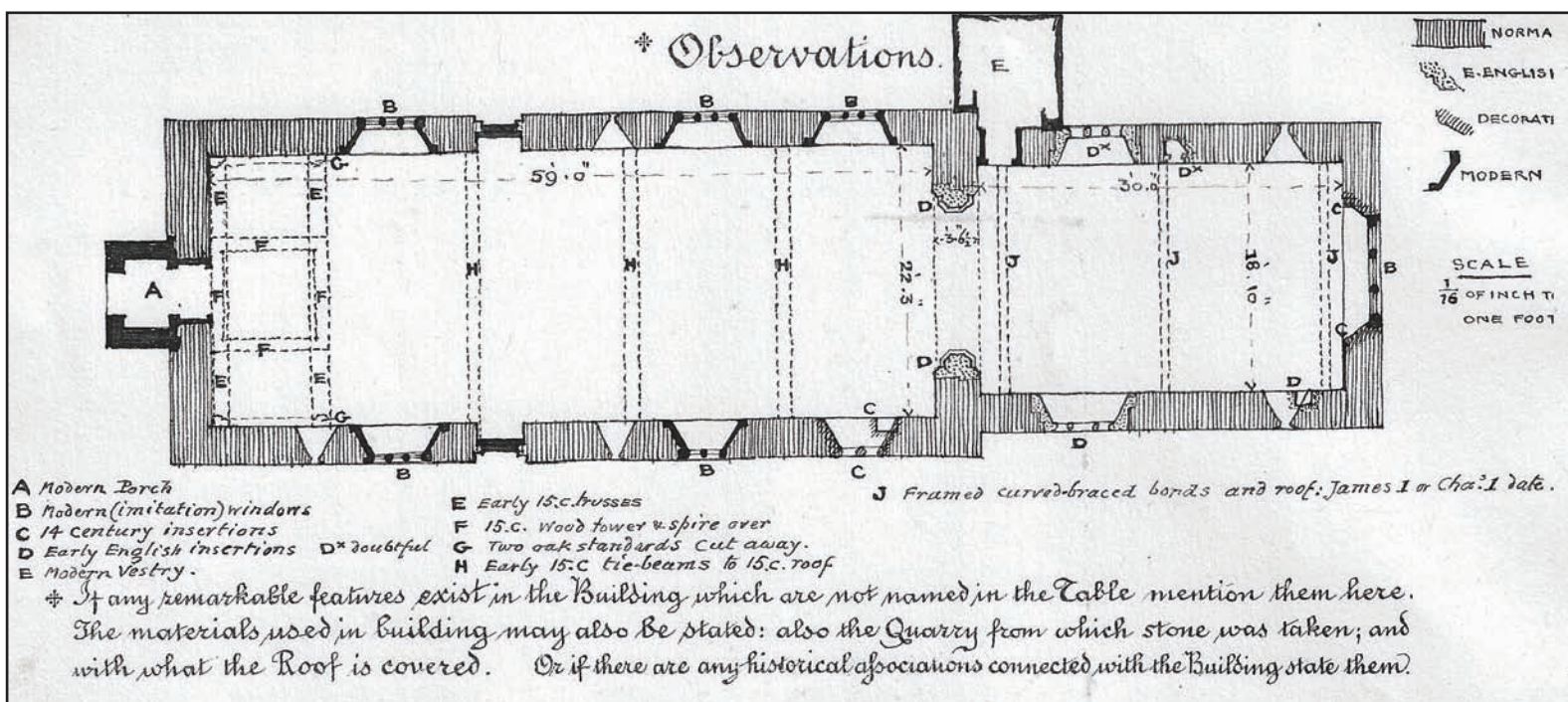
attractive than the old medieval church. Further evidence of the need for a bigger church is provided by the building of St James, Marden Ash, in the parish of High Ongar, at almost exactly the same time: their appeal was launched in 1879 and the new church opened in 1882, only half a mile from St Martin's. Perhaps Tanner saw

this church as an unwelcome rival, as well as the Independents and Roman Catholics.

The architect chosen by the committee was Clapton Crabb Rolfe (1845-1907), not a well-known architect even to those who are interested in Victorian architecture. He was based in Oxford and nearly all his known work is in that county or diocese.

3. Photograph of the church from the north-east, taken between 1861 and 1883. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Society for Archaeology and History, SLIB94911A)





4. Plan of the church in 1883, from the report prepared by Philip Webb and G.P. Boyce for the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. Note the deep reveals of the narrow Norman windows, and the 'modern (imitation) windows' and 'modern vestry' dating from 1860–61, as well as the 'modern porch' added earlier in the nineteenth century. (Reproduced by courtesy of the SPAB).

He never, however, achieved his ambition of becoming diocesan architect, a post that would have sealed his career and his reputation; he has been described as 'a man of great promise and of sometimes really noteworthy achievement, marred by a certain narrowness of attitude which prevented him from expanding his scope'. The fact was that he held religious convictions that were on occasion too strong for his clients and for the authorities; he was a committed Anglo-Catholic, and wrote learned works on such topics – very controversial at the time – as chancel screens, liturgical colours, and incense.¹⁴

The mystery is how he came to be appointed at Chipping Ongar. He had a slight connection with Essex, in that there was a branch of his family at Rayne, near Braintree. Rolfe is known to have been living in Braintree in 1871 and at this time was working at Holy Trinity, Rayleigh, where he introduced new choir stalls and a new font.

Ernest Geldart, rector of Little Braxted, visited Rayleigh in 1881 and wrote in his diary: 'The Church has been badly restored by Rolfe who has arrived at the monumental style & succeeded in putting up choir stalls wh. would stand a mild siege & a font of wh. the Pharoahs might make use to replace a worn out Pyramid.'¹⁵ But Rayne is not particularly close to Chipping Ongar, there is a gap of nearly ten years, and there is nothing obvious to link Tanner with Rolfe. Tanner had been at Oxford and it is possible that he knew the parson of one of the churches that Rolfe restored in Oxfordshire. Tanner's churchmanship, which might provide a link, was High but not immoderately so; he is listed in *Ritualism Rampant*, a pamphlet published in 1892 to expose those clergy in the diocese of St Albans (as Essex then was) who had dangerous Papist tendencies, the indicator in Tanner's case being the relatively common one of adopting the eastward position when celebrating Holy

Communion.¹⁶ But that in itself would not have been enough to make him seek out an Anglo-Catholic architect in Oxford.

Rolfe's report was discussed by the vestry meeting in May 1881, and as far as the accommodation was concerned, the go-ahead was given for the new south aisle, expected to cost between £800 and £1,000 and providing 60–80 additional seats. Rolfe had also recommended taking down the gallery and adding a north aisle, but this was not taken up. The repairs he recommended were a relatively minor matter, expected to cost £162 10s 2d.¹⁷

So the work of fundraising began. A major event was a bazaar held over two days in June 1882 (Fig.5).¹⁸

It was under the patronage of the great and the good, including A.H. Christie, one of the churchwardens, but also the Lord-Lieutenant of Essex, Lord Carlingford, and clergy and gentry from neighbouring parishes. (The other churchwarden,

T.E. Rose, was a tailor and hatter; Chipping Ongar conformed to the normal rule whereby the rector's warden was a gentleman and the people's warden a tradesman or farmer.) Most of the actual organisation was presumably undertaken by the ladies listed, headed by Lady Jane Swinburne, patron of the living (and mother of the poet A.C. Swinburne). By the time of the Bazaar £550, half the sum needed, had already been raised. As well as stalls 'heavily laden with almost every conceivable kind of useful and ornamental articles usually found at fancy fairs', there was 'a large assortment of painted china, some beautiful Munich glass wares, a portrait of Greensted Church, fancy dolls of all descriptions and sizes, a number of grotesque painted tubs, some splendidly worked silk cushions, magnificently painted silk borderings, a quantity of choice lithographs, etc.' There were various other attractions including, in a small corner of the hall, 'Light in darkness, enquire within', 'where was to be seen for a small fee a number of figures in illuminated paint, including one of the late Lord Beaconsfield'. This presumably refers to luminous paint, patented by W. H. Balmain as recently as 1877. Lottery prizes included a model of Greensted Church made in plaster of Paris in 1847.¹⁹

But fundraising was not entirely left to the gentry. In December 1881 Mrs Carman, a milliner and dressmaker, conceived the idea of inviting her numerous lady patronesses to contribute little articles to a Christmas tree. On the first day the room was crowded with purchasers, who were so liberal in their demands that little was left for the second day, and considerable efforts had to be made for the second supply of visitors. She had the pleasure of handing over £10 to the enlargement fund and the balance, £5 3s 3d, to the repairs fund.²⁰

Another source of money was the Essex Church Building Society, which had been set up in 1838 as a local equivalent of the Incorporated Church Building Society. Like the ICBS, its main aim was to provide additional seating in churches, and grants were given on the condition that a proportion of the new seats, and ideally all of them, should be free. A board at the back of the church records that they gave a grant of £40, and that half of the additional 72 seats were 'free for the use of the poor for ever'.

Just as everything seemed to be going smoothly, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) got wind of the scheme – perhaps they had seen the announcement of the proposed enlargement in *Building News*, in July 1882 (the cutting is in the SPAB file), or perhaps a local correspondent had alerted them – and in January 1883 two committee members, G.P. Boyce and Philip Webb, paid a visit to the church. The SPAB was still a new organisation – as novel as luminous paint, in fact, having been founded in 1877 by William Morris together with his architect friend Philip Webb, as a desperate attempt to reverse the trend of over-zealous restoration on the part of Gothic Revival architects. The early members of the SPAB were a close-knit group of like-minded people. Webb had designed the Red House for William Morris in 1858–9, and in due course would design his gravestone; he also built a house for Boyce, a close friend who had started out as an architect but switched to painting, supported by his wealthy father, a London wine merchant. Boyce, incidentally, had been to boarding school in Chipping Ongar, so already had some knowledge of the place.²¹ The SPAB was and remains an influential organisation, and is now one of the bodies that has a right to be consulted about and comment upon any proposed alterations or repairs to listed buildings, or their demolition. But in 1883, barely

six years old, it had no statutory powers, no real authority, and Chipping Ongar might well have wondered who these people were to tell them what to do with their own church.

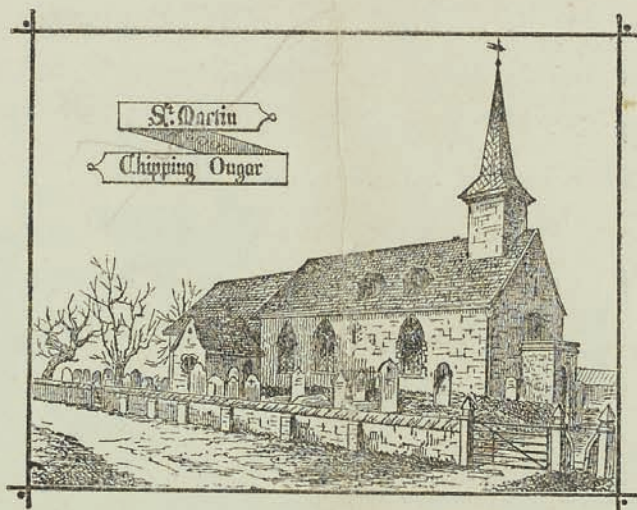
Boyce and Webb reported to the SPAB Committee, whose secretary, Thomas Wise, then wrote to Tanner and the churchwardens. The Committee had been struck by the great interest of the church, 'having been practically unaltered in plan since its foundation', although 'some very harsh & ill-considered repairs were made in 1860 which greatly injured the building'. It understood that the church was too small for the congregation:

It is quite evident that to attempt to enlarge this deeply interesting building would be fatal to its integrity & value as a remarkable memorial of ancient times; the Committee is bound therefore to urge upon the Guardians of the church to refuse to entertain the proposal of enlargement, & if the new district church [St James Marden Ash] should not be sufficient relief, another church should be built to serve the purpose of dividing the congregation.²²

The committee asked the rector and churchwardens to pass on to the architect 'a memorandum of what should be avoided in dealing with so valuable a piece of antiquity'.

Meanwhile, the SPAB opened up a second front by writing to Captain P.J. Budworth at Greensted Hall. This they did on the advice of Alfred Heales, an archaeologist, who knew of Budworth as 'a person of some influence, being Chairman of the County Magistrates and recently High Sheriff'. Captain Budworth did not give them the answer they must have been hoping for:

I cannot but think that the report which you enclose, presents an over-rated view



“Enlarge the place of thy Tent...lengthen thy cords, and
strengthen thy stakes.” LIV ISAIAH 2.

—o—

Oh! hasten, good people, whoever you are,
To that source of attraction, the Ongar Bazaar;
Let no one refuse this Poetical call,
For the Muse would resent it—so come one and all!
Its object is good—the old Church to enlarge,
And change (shall I call it?) the boat to a barge!
The success none must doubt, for as I understand
The Ladies have taken the matter in hand,
And whatever they plan in the way of good deed,
If they are but in earnest—’tis sure to succeed!
And in earnest they are, for they’ve worked night and day,
The Bazaar the result—a most splendid display!

And here, some might think, I should hand down to fame
The name and address of each Damsel and Dame,
Who forsaking all thoughts about dances and balls,
Give themselves to the work of attending the stalls;

5. Leaflet advertising the Ongar Bazaar, June 1882.
(Reproduced by courtesy of ERO, T/P 222/3)

of the loss that would be occasioned by the removal of the south walls of the Nave of this Church. With the exception of such Roman ? bricks as are worked into the South wall of the Nave all the features which the report mentions as interesting would remain untouched & whatever decay exists at the S.W. angle of the Church would be made good by the alteration. On the whole, so far as I can see my way at present I do not think it expedient to throw any impediment in the way of the proposed enlargement.²³

St Martin’s now also had the support of the bishop, in the form of the faculty giving permission for the building of the new aisle, granted in May 1883 – by which time £657 had been raised.²⁴

In July 1883, Thackeray Turner, who had succeeded Wise as secretary of the SPAB, wrote to Rolfe. He may have wished that he had not done so, or that he had expressed himself better:

The Committee feels that the very great importance of these historical remains cannot have been sufficiently considered by the guardians of the building, and they would earnestly beg that you would undertake to represent to them the fatal character of their proposal. The Committee were fully aware of the insuperable difficulties attendant upon any attempt to enlarge this Church, and it is convinced that, even now, further efforts should be made to avert from the Church the serious and shameful destruction of a very notable example of Early Norman Architecture, partly built with Roman materials.²⁵

Rolfe’s response is a masterpiece of the art of letter-writing:

Dear Sir

I am very much surprised at your letter of the 20th inst. It exaggerates, I may say grossly exaggerates, what the building Committee are about to do.

You wrote to me upon this business last month, informing me that a member of your Society (Mr W. Morris) would call upon me on a day named. I remained in my office to keep the appointment, but he did not call. About a week afterwards Mr Morris called. I then shewed him the plans for the new Aisle, and courteously gave him all the information he asked for. He thereupon distinctly told me there was nothing in his opinion that the Society could do in the matter, and that he should report so to your Committee.

After this admission, and after what has already passed on the subject, I am both surprised and pained at being written to in this way – in a manner which must repel rather than encourage confidence in your Society.

What are the facts of the case? That additional church accommodation at Ongar is necessary: and that the building Committee are about to do what the old churchmen of this land never hesitated to do when necessary – enlarge their parish church. These are the facts of the case.

Now what is it that you advise – not to do what the old builders almost invariably did in mediaeval times (*viz.* enlarge the existing church): but to adopt the more modern expedient of building a second church in the parish.

Where, may I ask, are the funds to come from to carry out this programme? Would your Society supply the difference in cost between building a new church and enlarging the old one? Have you thought of this? The living is but a poor one and the Rector, like so many other clergymen in the Church of England, has already, I venture to say, much more work to do than the value of the living is any adequate return for. How then could the living be saddled with the additional burden of a second church? You must surely see the impracticability of your scheme.

As an antiquary I take exception to some of your statements having reference to the existing work. You go on to speak of what we are about to do as “shameful”. You must be aware that the old builders in carrying out a new aisle were wont to take down what of necessity they were obliged to do, and carefully and reverently to build up in the core of the new walling those portions of the old stonework they did not use again. Was it “shameful” of them to go to work in this way? If not, why do you use such language in this case? It is, under the circumstances, most unjustifiable. As the old builders did, we shall do also.

Let me add a word of advice, as from one who is not one whit less keenly alive than any member of your Society to the great importance of retaining every bit of genuine old work that can be kept, not only because it is old, but because of those grand principles of construction and design which underlie it. The last twenty years of my life have been devoted to the study of old work, and year by year I feel a growing enthusiasm for it. I am therefore one of the last men to lend a hand in ruthlessly destroying old work, as your letter implies. Nay more; if any client of mine persisted in doing anything to an old building which as an antiquary I felt was wrong, I would at once retire from the engagement. Let me therefore give this word of advice – if your Society wishes to inspire confidence, it should act with a little more discernment, and write with a little more courtesy, than in this case...

If there is any information I can at any time supply to your Society it will give me pleasure to co-operate with you. But in this particular case, and after what your own representative who has called upon me said, I should be extremely obliged if you would allow this Ongar correspondence to close, for I really have not time at disposal to continue it.

I am, Yours faithfully Clapton Rolfe

On a separate sheet, explaining what he proposes doing with regard to reusing an old window: 'I must ask you not to expect all these explanations in another case. I give them in this instance to remove an erroneous impression. To tell the truth I think you have gone a little too far in this case, and that some apology is needed'.²⁶

There is nothing more in the SPAB file, and it must be assumed that under this onslaught they withdrew from the fray. Rolfe produced the necessary drawings (Fig.6),²⁷ which he sent to the contractor, Frederick Noble, and the new aisle was opened in November 1884, the total cost being put at £1,173.

As well as achieving the purpose of providing additional seating, it is a very decent piece of work, brought to life by good detailing. Noble was the main contractor, with roofing and seating carried out by Henry Barlow, also of Chipping Ongar; but the finer carving was the work of Harry Hems of Exeter, one of the leading architectural sculptors of the day, whose work can be found on and in churches all over the country, and whom Rolfe used for a lot of his buildings.²⁸

Although the aisle was finished, other work remained to be done. There was the west porch to be rebuilt – these designs are dated 1885 and 1887²⁹ – and in the latter year the roughcast was removed from the walls of the church, exposing the 'ankerhold' or anchorite's cell on the north side of the chancel.³⁰

In addition, as was normal with such projects, the new south aisle was beautified by the insertion of stained glass windows, the first being the east window, 1885, with glass by Heaton, Butler & Bayne: it depicts the Transfiguration, and is a memorial to Edmund Fisher, the rector for 36 years to 1869.³¹ In due course a window was placed opposite it, at the west end of the aisle, as a memorial to Tanner's wife Lilla, who died

in 1908. It shows on the left Dorcas, 'full of good works and almsdeeds', and on the right Timothy and Eunice, the boy being instructed in the Scripture by his mother.

Tanner himself lived on until 1914; he died on 24th November, at Bognor, where he had gone for his health.³² His obituary in the *Essex Review*³³ says that he was 80, but as he is said elsewhere³⁴ to have been 17 in 1849 he may have been a couple of years older. In a sense the south aisle is his monument, but there are two actual memorials: the Good Shepherd window in the south aisle, and a wall tablet just inside the west door. Like Fisher he had been rector for 36 years, and although he is not widely celebrated – there is no mention of him in the Victoria County History, for example – he seems to have been genuinely admired. Proof of this is to be found in the fact that, every year since 1887, his parishioners had raised nearly £100 by voluntary collections, to supplement his meagre stipend.³⁵ A private tribute is to be found in the diary of George H. Rose, an artist who was presumably one of the children of the churchwarden T.E. Rose:

Mr Tanner our greatly revered Rector died yesterday at Bognor. This is a shock altho' long expected, and it will lead to much trouble I fear. He was very nearly [i.e. closely] concerned in my education. He preached in most stately and dignified English. His accent was superb & his voice never strained. A man of deep piety yet reserved to a fault. A powerful praying man; a typical English clergyman, of the best sort. He was one in spirit with the compilers of the Book of Common Prayer, its measured and sonorous language suited him as it never suited any man. His reading of the Litany was at the same time dignified and intensely

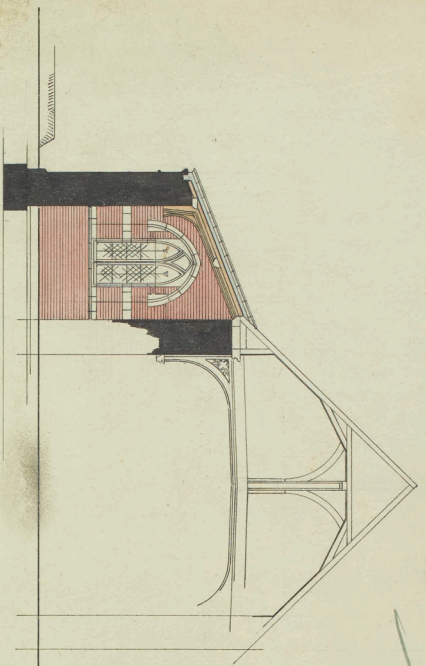
prayerful. As he grew older this intensity increased till sometimes his petitions were like a cry of anguish. Although he was totally without a musical ear yet he was so earnest & sincere that his reading of such phrases was unconsciously musical in a very high degree.³⁶

By way of footnote, mention should be made of Tanner's daughter, Lilla Whitelocke Tanner, who died in 1920 at the age of 46 – at Eastbourne where she, like her father, had gone for her health.³⁷ She left her money for the beautifying of the church, and there are two windows to her memory: the conventional Annunciation in the south aisle, and the very good chancel east window by Leonard Walker, which was granted a faculty in 1929.³⁸ It was very likely George Rose who had the artistic vision that led to this striking work being placed here, because the other Leonard Walker window in St Martin's – the determined-looking St George, also in the south aisle – is a memorial to T.E. Rose, who died in 1925.³⁹ Thus he is commemorated in the south aisle which he, as one of the two churchwardens, was instrumental in building.

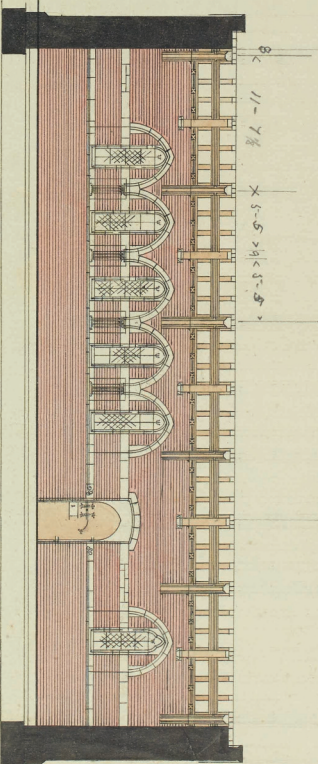
References

1. Essex Record Office (ERO), D/P 124/6/1, Plan of repewing of church, 1832.
2. Ongar Millennium History Group, *Aspects of the History of Ongar* (Chipping Ongar, 1999), p.18.
3. W. R. Powell (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Essex*, IV (London, 1956), p.164.
4. ERO, I/Mb 262/1/4; *Aspects*, p.15.
5. ERO, A13366, Album of cuttings, prints, photographs and drawings relating to Essex churches, f.87v.
6. ERO, D/P 124/6/7, Sketches of proposed new vestry by E. Swansborough (incorrectly catalogued as 1881).
7. ERO, D/P 124/6/2, Report of

new south aisle, shipping sugar church, Essex

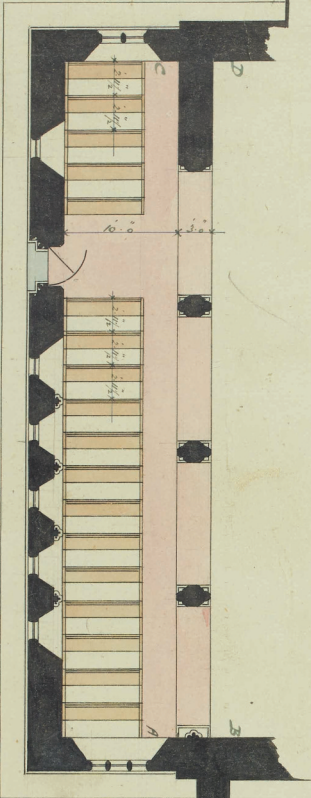


section of aisle showing West end



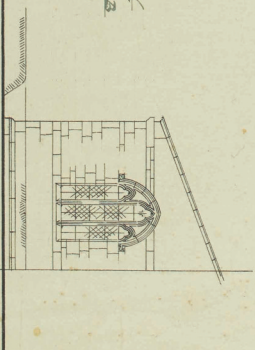
Longitudinal section

Height of finished floor at C is 12 ft. 6 in. inside face of foundation at D



Ground plan

Course of the aisle in setting out, across that face of foundation at A is placed with face of foundation at B



East end

*Clapton Rolfe, Architect
St. Michael's Church, Bedford
April 1884*

6. Clapton Rolfe's design for the new south aisle, April 1884. (Reproduced by courtesy of ERO, D/P 124/6/12)

- E. Swansborough, 26/12/1863.
8. ERO, D/P 124/6/4, Subscription lists for repair of organ and for seats in gallery, 1877-8; *Aspects*, p.18.
 9. J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: the members of the University of Essex, 1715-1886* (Oxford, 1887-8), p.1386; *Crockford's Clerical Directory*, 1904, p.1356; Obituary in *Essex Review* (ER), 24, (1915), p.45; A. Tuckwell, 'That honourable and gentlemanlike house': a history of King Edward VI Grammar School, Chelmsford 1551-2001 (Chelmsford, 2001), pp.59-60.
 10. O. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church: part II: 1860-1901* (London, 1987), pp.167-8.
 11. ERO, T/P 222/3, Notice of bazaar in aid of fund to enlarge parish church, 1882.
 12. Plan in SPAB file.
 13. ERO, D/P 124/6/6, Circular letter announcing meeting of parishioners to discuss condition of church fabric, 13/11/1880; *Chelmsford Chronicle* (CC), 26/11/1880, p.2.
 14. A. Saint, 'Three Oxford Architects', *Oxoniensia* 35 (1970), pp.53-102.
 15. Rev. E. Geldart, unpublished diary entry, 20/4/1881. See ERO, T/Z 561/1/49.
 16. *Ritualism rampant in the Diocese of St. Albans, with the names of each parish, incumbent, and patron, date of appointment, and details of practices...* (London, [1892]).

- Copy in ERO Library.
17. CC, 6/5/1881, p.5.
 18. ERO, T/P 222/3; D/DU 1786 (A9613), records concerning Chipping Ongar.
 19. CC, 30/6/1882, p.6.
 20. *Essex Newsman* (EN), 26/12/1881, p.2.
 21. C. Newall, 'Boyce, George Price (1826-1897)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/59467, (02/07/2017); *Aspects*, p.16, transcribes his name incorrectly as Boyer.
 22. SPAB file, Thomas Wise to rector and churchwardens, Feb. 1883.
 23. SPAB file, Budworth to Thackeray Turner, 14/07/1883.
 24. ERO, D/P 124/6/8 & D/CF 22/6, Faculty to erect new aisle, 05/05/1883.
 25. ERO, D/P 124/6/9.
 26. ERO, D/P 124/6/9, Correspondence between the SPAB and C. Rolfe, 1883; SPAB file, Rolfe to Turner, 23/07/1883.
 27. ERO, D/P 124/6/10-14, Plans, elevations and sections of south aisle, 1883.
 28. EN, 29/11/1884, p.2; *Building News* (BN) 47 (05/12/1884), pp.923-4; *Builder* 47 (06/12/1884), p.775.
 29. ERO, D/P 124/6/15-16, Elevations and sections of new west porch, 1885.
 30. *Archaeological Journal* 45 (1888), p.284.

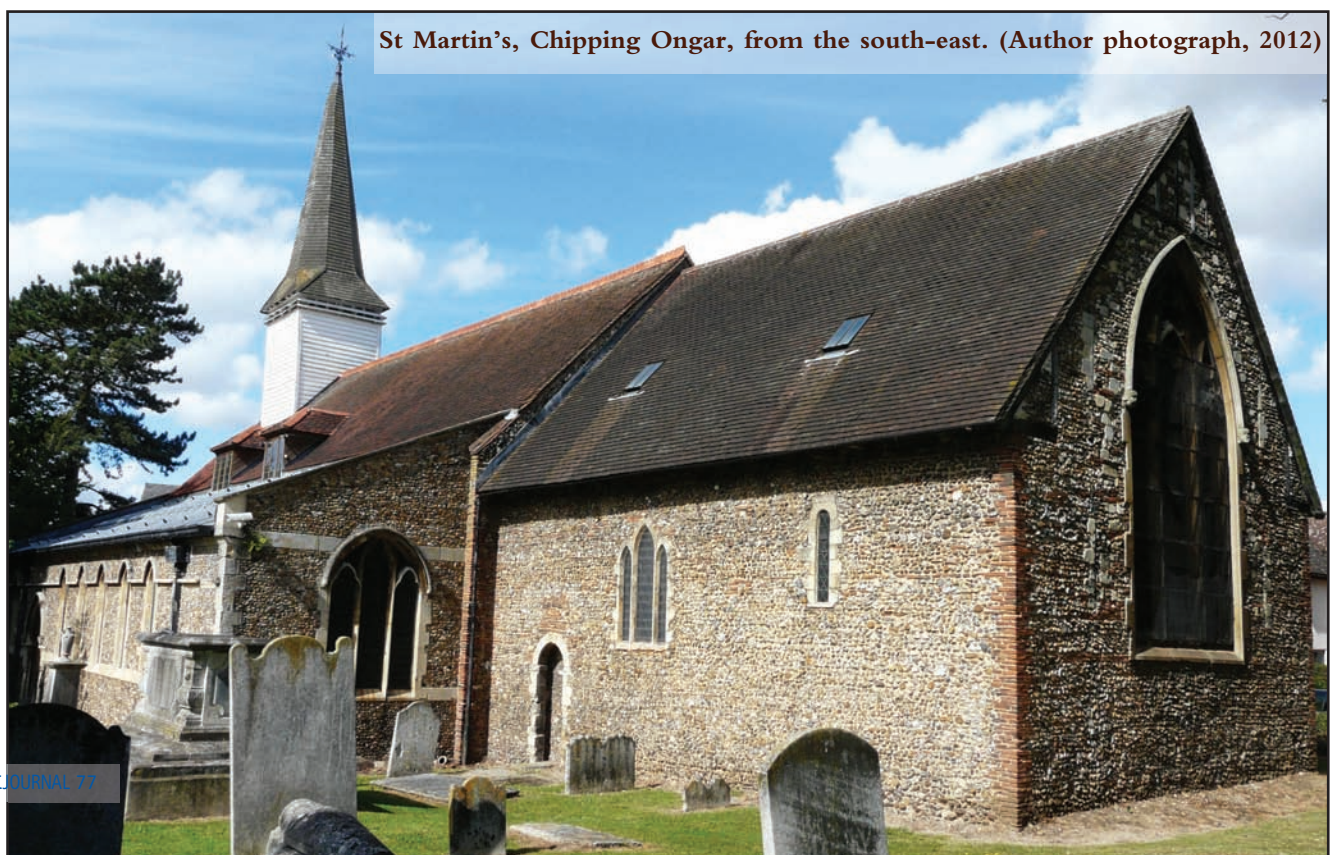
31. BN 49 (30/10/1885), p.712.
32. EN, 28/11/1914/, p.3.
33. Obit ER.
34. Foster, p.1386.
35. Obit ER. For the 'Easter offering', cf. Chadwick, p.169.
36. ERO, D/DU 418/15, Diary of G.H. Rose.
37. *Essex Chronicle*, 28/5/1920, p.6. *Aspects*, p.19, describes her as Tanner's niece.
38. ERO, D/CF 68/20, Faculty to replace plain glass, 1929.
39. ERO, D/CF 69/14, Faculty to replace plain glass, 1930.

Acknowledgments

This article is based on a talk given to the Friends of St Martin's and the Ongar Millennium History Society in 2012, and I am grateful to Michael Leach for the invitation and subsequent discussion and encouragement. I am also grateful to Elaine Byrne of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings for her assistance when consulting the Society's archive in Spital Square, London, and to the SPAB for permission to quote at length from the file relating to Chipping Ongar.

The Author

Dr James Bettley is an architectural historian. His revision of the Pevsner Architectural Guide to Essex was published in 2007, followed by Suffolk in 2015; his revision of Hertfordshire is approaching completion and should be published in 2019.



St Martin's, Chipping Ongar, from the south-east. (Author photograph, 2012)

The Red Cross in Essex 1914–1918:

Hospitals, Fundraising, and the Contribution of Middle and Upper Class Women

by

Caroline Wallace

At the outbreak of the First World War in the summer of 1914, the Essex branch of the British Red Cross received hundreds of offers of help from individuals, and offers of the use of buildings including private houses, schools, hotels, workhouses and village halls to be used as hospitals. By the end of the war the number of Red Cross Auxiliary Hospitals in the county stood at 40, so use of the buildings was gratefully taken up.¹ Alongside these auxiliary hospitals, which were staffed by local doctors and Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurses and general service workers, were six military hospitals across the county and these also came to be staffed, in part, by Red Cross volunteers. This article will examine the part that middle and upper class women played in the staffing and funding of Red Cross auxiliary hospitals, and how this contributed to the war effort in the county.

As men left to join the military forces, women began to take their positions in the workplace; however, from the beginning this was motivated by necessity rather than patriotism in many cases, especially for working and lower middle class women who could not sustain their families on the maintenance grants they received from the government.² For many young women, the freedom and money offered by manual factory work was attractive compared to the strict rules and low pay of domestic work.³ On a national scale, there was concern about the changing roles of women and the influence that entering paid employment, especially manual labour, might have on

the ladies of the middle and upper classes. Although some ladies of social standing did take up manual work, or at least entered factories as ‘Lady Superintendents’ with the responsibility of ensuring the moral standards (and in most cases raising the welfare standards) of the women workers, most took up voluntary roles with organisations like the Red Cross. Some upper class (and often suffragette) ladies volunteered with the Women Police Service (WPS), often in order to monitor and control the morals and behaviour of other women on a more general scale.⁴

The Essex branch of the Red Cross Society, and the VADs that formed the branch, was created in 1909 under the leadership of Lady Warwick, the wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Essex. The War Office had issued a ‘Scheme for the Organisation of Voluntary Aid’, under which the Red Cross were to support the military medical forces in the event of a war.⁵ In 1914 membership of the Essex branch stood at around 2,000 men and women, divided into 73 detachments.⁶ Detachments were divided by gender, with a male Commandant and were numbered by county (e.g., No 45 Essex VAD), with even numbers given to women’s units and odd numbers to men’s. Initially, those qualified to join were registered medical practitioners (male and female), trained nurses and pharmacists, and those who had first aid qualifications from the St John Ambulance Brigade. As the war progressed, anyone old enough and who could prove their ability were allowed to join up. Women

were supposed to be aged 23 to 38 years, but in reality many younger and older women served.⁷ A Mrs Dora Mair of Woodford Green was 49 when she signed up in 1916,⁸ and Miss Marjorie Stevens Tozer, from Theydon Bois near Epping, was 20 when she joined in 1914.⁹ In the early days of the war, the men’s detachments helped in the transportation of wounded soldiers from train stations and docks, including those at Tilbury, and worked as ambulance drivers and night orderlies in the hospitals.¹⁰ When conscription was introduced in 1916 for all able bodied men aged 18 to 41, women replaced men in these roles.¹¹ General Service VADs acted as cooks, cleaners, clerks, dispensers and storekeepers. Seen as acceptable and suitable roles for women in an age that still held its Victorian attitude to morals and propriety in high regard, work as a Red Cross VAD (as either a nurse or general service worker) and fundraiser fulfilled all the requirements of a middle or upper class lady in a society at war.

Auxiliary Hospitals

In early August 1914, Sir Daniel and Lady Gooch offered the whole of the ground floor of Hylands House, in Chelmsford and in an excellent position with its private railway siding, to the Red Cross and by the end of the month it had been transformed into a hospital of five wards to hold 100 beds.¹² Initially Hylands took walking-wounded soldiers from France and Belgium, but during the first Battle of the Somme in 1916, it also took men who had come straight from the front.¹³ In total, approximately



**1. Woodford Green Auxiliary Hospital c.1915, built at the expense of Thomas Sutcliffe Armstrong in the grounds of his home, Brookfield House. This is a very good example of the type of building used for small, local auxiliary hospitals.
(ERO, D/DU 787/4)**

2,000 soldiers passed through the Chelmsford hospitals during the war.¹⁴ In Southend, the Glen Holiday Home became the first auxiliary hospital in the borough and was soon joined by the Overcliff Hotel and Hamilton Convalescent Home by the end of 1914,¹⁵ and by the end of the war, approximately 4,500 patients had been treated at the Overcliff and the Glen hospitals.¹⁶ Gostwycke Auxiliary Hospital in Colchester was approved and created in September 1914, and eventually became an arm of the Colchester Military Hospital (as did the Essex County Hospital in Colchester which took both military and civilian patients throughout the war, women patients being moved into the Colchester High School in Wellesley Road for the duration).¹⁷ Between 1914 and 1918 the Colchester hospitals had dealt with nearly 4,000 patients¹⁸ with over 2,000 patients being treated at the Gostwycke Auxiliary Hospital alone.¹⁹ At Stansted Hall in Halsted,

Mr Samuel and Mrs Elizabeth Courtauld opened part of their house to the Red Cross, and even funded the fitting out of the wards.²⁰ Auxiliary hospitals opened in even the smallest of villages. Wivenhoe, on the river Colne outside of Colchester, was one of the first to open, in the infant's school, within a week of the outbreak of war.²¹ Ardleigh, Earls Colne, Thorpe-Le-Soken, Mersea and Tolleshunt D'arcy, amongst others, all had their own auxiliary hospitals.²²

In February 1915 Red Cross VADs were permitted for the first time to work in Royal Army Medical Corps (military) Hospitals, as opposed to just auxiliary hospitals, upon the recognition that more help was needed in treating the wounded soldiers that were filling them.²³ Whereas the Red Cross auxiliary hospitals commonly took soldiers with non-life threatening injuries, military hospitals took men with the most serious injuries, who would often later be moved to convalescence homes. The work

in military hospitals was generally harder and more strenuous than in auxiliary hospitals, primarily because of the type of injuries that were being dealt with. In Essex there were six Military hospitals. The Middlesex Military War Hospital in Clacton was also a convalescent home for recuperating soldiers. In Southend the Shoebury Garrison Military Hospital was one of the first to take the wounded straight from trains, although unfortunately little else is known.²⁴ The Garrison Military Hospital at Harwich shared its space on the upper floor of the Great Eastern Railway Hotel with the Dovercourt Military Hospital.²⁵ The King George Hospital in Ilford became affiliated with Colchester Military Hospital, as did all the Colchester Auxiliary hospitals.²⁶ The importance of the Red Cross VADs being able to work in the military hospitals meant that they gained invaluable experience, which they could put into practice 'in the field' when needed. VADs were seen



**2. Former teacher and local VAD Lily Nevard with some wounded soldiers who had been treated at the Great Horkesley Auxiliary Hospital.
(ERO D/DU 1264/10)**

in various lights by the trained nurses they worked with. Ethel Bedford Fenwick, long time campaigner for the registration of nurses as professionals, was simply anti-VAD and wrote that it was 'a waste of money to transport untrained women in any capacity whatsoever'.²⁷ However, this does not seem to be the point of view of all nurses – Sister Edith Appleton appeared to have a great admiration for their contribution.²⁸ Well known VAD Vera Brittain does not mention any nurses in particular who took a dislike to her or her fellow VADS, and Essex Nurse Kate Luard similarly does not mention any dislike or issues she had with them.²⁹

It has been suggested that the charity work ethos undertaken by aristocratic and society ladies was inherited from their 'philanthropic Victorian Grandmamas'.³⁰

Seen as acceptable and suitable for ladies of the middle and upper classes, it was also diverting and fulfilling enough for these women who had no paid work or childcare responsibilities. At Goswycke Hospital in Colchester, it was said that its 'matrons, nurses, dispensers, quartermaster, cooks, kitchen maids and scullery helpers' were middle-class ladies taking advantage of the opportunities that came their way as a result of the war.³¹ However, for most middle and upper class ladies, it was the fundraising that held most appeal.

Funding the Hospitals

As far as funding these hospitals and convalescence homes went, only a small grant of £1.4s.6d (approximately £53 today) per week was paid by the government for each bed.³² Although

some of the owners of the country houses provided finance for the hospitals within them, such as Sir and Lady Gooch at Hylands House in Chelmsford who paid £100 each month towards its upkeep, the rest of the money had to be raised by the hospital itself, and this often became the preserve of the middle and upper class ladies of the district.³³ In Laindon, the community held 'plays, dances, concert parties, musical evenings, Shakespearian evenings, debating societies' and much more in their church hall after it was built in 1907, and these activities carried on in support of the Red Cross during the war.³⁴ A German R class Zeppelin airship that crashed in Little Wigborough, about 12 miles from Colchester, managed to attract a donation of £74 for the Red Cross from enterprising locals who organised trips to the

CHELMSFORD & ESSEX HOSPITAL.

POUND DAY.

Contributions of any useful articles for the Household will be gratefully received, such as the following :—

Tea, Coffee, Cocoa, ~~Sugar, Butter, Bacon,~~
Eggs, Fruit, Vegetables, Cakes, Jam, ~~Flour,~~
Invalid Foods, Safety Pins, Soap, Metal Polish,
~~Tongues,~~ Bottled Fruits, Bovril, Biscuits, etc.

Donations in money will also be very acceptable.

Please write quantity and kind of contents on each parcel.

The following figures will afford a little idea of the work done at the Hospital last year :—
Number of Patients admitted.

Civil Cases	-	-	-	618
Wounded Soldiers	-	-	-	533
Local Military Cases	-	-	-	5
Total				1156

The wounded soldiers are accommodated in the Essex Hut, erected at the rear of the main building, under the Essex Branch of the British Red Cross Society.

A proportion of the Pound Day contributions will be given to this Red Cross Hut.

Please send your gifts to

Mrs Bradhurst
at *Rivenhall Place*
between the hours of *11* & *2 o'clock*
on *May 2nd 1918.*
who will forward them to the Hospital.

3 Card advertising a Pound Day for the Essex Red Cross organised by Mrs Minna Bradhurst, giving details of what could be donated and where they will be collected.
(ERO, A14491, Box 1)

site for wounded soldiers and sold aluminium charms and tokens made from the skeleton of the craft.³⁵ During 1915, fundraising efforts across the county raised approximately £4,480 towards the running of the auxiliary hospitals – quite a significant amount of money, even today. In addition to this, £900 was raised to buy and maintain two ambulances that were used in France and Belgium.³⁶ In 1916 the government passed the War Charities Act under which each charity that was appealing directly to the public for funds had to be registered individually. This meant that each Red Cross hospital, convalescent home and work depot had to be registered separately and have a committee to over-see their fundraising activities. Many people believed that this would hinder charity work in aid of the Red Cross, but in fact it ensured that all monies raised would actually go to the particular place requesting it.³⁷ Each Red Cross hospital, home or depot that registered

with the Joint War Committee was administered by the local authority (eg, Southend Borough Council or Colchester Borough Council). Despite the War Charities Act, there are many cases in Essex newspapers throughout the war of fraudulent Red Cross collections, some involving dismissed soldiers pretending to collect for the Essex Regiment Cigarette Fund,³⁸ to women dressed in Red Cross nurses uniforms accused of falsely collecting money for auxiliary hospitals.³⁹ It appears that the act of fraudulently raising money may have continued, but at least those caught faced punishment for their actions, and the public could be safe in the knowledge that their money was going to the right place.

Amongst the Essex ladies who took up VAD work in the county's hospitals was Miss Christine Bradhurst. Christine worked as a general service VAD at the Earls Colne Auxiliary Hospital, and worked as a fundraiser for the Red Cross in

her locality. The daughter of Minna Bradhurst, née Page Wood, of the prominent county Wood family, and great-niece of Field Marshall Sir Evelyn Wood (renowned Victorian Imperialist and military man), she could have chosen to become a nurse, but instead decided to put her artistic talents to use organising fundraising concerts, plays, musicals and comedies to collect money for the Red Cross in Essex. The Essex Record Office holds one original and several microfilm copies of scrapbooks put together by Minna Bradhurst that document Christine's fundraising endeavours.⁴⁰ These show the effort that she, and other ladies in the county, put into raising money for the Red Cross. Christine appears exceptional in that she not only organised the fundraising concerts, but that she wrote and performed in many of the plays herself. Across the county, other society ladies put their time and effort into fundraising for their local Red Cross hospitals.



**4. VADs in training at a rally in Hylands Park, Chelmsford. This is possibly pre-war, but it gives a very good idea of the sort of training that they volunteers went through. Note the long dresses, as per the social expectations of dress, and the full head scarves. Working in uniforms like these became a frustration of nurses and VADs.
(ERO, T/Z 140/1)**

Mrs W.B. Slaughter was asked by Colonel Harvey, medical officer at the hospital, to help with 'provisions for the soldiers welfare' and organised a 'Comforts for the Sick and Wounded Fund' at Gostwycke Hospital (based on one she had seen at the hospital in Boulogne where she had visited her wounded son). The fund distributed 'sweets (especially chocolates), looking glasses and scented soap, tooth brushes and powder, shaving brushes, hair-brushes and combs, all kinds of newspapers – especially illustrated ones – cakes, fruits, and many other things too numerous to mention'.⁴¹ In order to fund the scheme, Mrs Slaughter planned and put on concerts, and it is for this contribution to

the war effort that she appears to be remembered.⁴² Fundraising concerts for the three Southend Auxiliary hospitals were held with some degree of regularity by the Southend-on-Sea Charity Entertainment Committee, and were often held in the Hippodrome theatre in Southchurch Road.⁴³ In Hornchurch, local women joined the Queen Mary Needlework Guild but it proved so popular that it soon became the 'Hornchurch and Upminster War Hospital Supply Depot and Working Parties'.⁴⁴ The *Chelmsford Chronicle* records a production of 'Cinderella' in Little Easton, near Bishop Stortford, put together by the Countess of Warwick in aid of the Essex Branch.⁴⁵ Many

newspapers began to list the gifts that individuals gave to local auxiliary hospitals. These 'gifts' were anything from fruit and vegetables, to blankets, chocolate and toiletries.⁴⁶

The work of the middle and upper class ladies in the hospitals, convalescence homes and work depots has been described as 'the perfect means by which women were able to demonstrate their patriotism, feel valued and useful and [be] confident that they were achieving something significant'.⁴⁷ It also had the effect of bolstering civilian morale, especially when the working class saw that all sections of society were doing something for the war effort, although how much 'effort' they believed the middle and upper classes were actually



5. Staff outside the Queen Mary hospital in Southend. Who or what they are waving at is unknown, although it could be a celebratory photograph taken at the end of the war as the date is given as 1919. (ERO, D/DS 476/11/18)

putting in is another matter.

In 1917 the Essex Red Cross Society published some figures about its work in the county since 1914: 240,000 plus garments had sent to those at the front and in hospitals, 1.5 million cigarettes had been distributed to units of the Essex regiment and two ambulances had been sent to the front.⁴⁸ A substantial part of this was down to the actions of the society ladies of Essex who encouraged and coerced the public of the county to give what they could, to attend the dances, concerts, entertainments, tea parties and fetes that they organised, to donate to the Pound Days (Fig.5), and to volunteer their valuable spare time to Red Cross Depots and Working Parties. Although the

image of middle and upper class ladies has very much been seen via the 'sock knitting myth', especially when compared to the manual labour of working class women in the factories, and the tough conditions faced by VADs and nurses across the world, it was vital to the war effort in Britain, and ultimately helped the country to be victorious.⁴⁹

References

1. www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/Who-we-are/History-and-origin/First-World-War/Auxiliary-hospitals, (17/08/2017).
2. S.R. Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (Harlow, 2002), p.27.
3. A. Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depended; Munitions Workers in the Great War* (London, 1994), pp.1 & 4.

4. J. Marlow (ed), *The Virago Book of Women and the Great War* (London, 1998), p.408; H. Scott, 'Barker, Dame Lilian Charlotte (1874–1955)', rev. D. Thom, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30590, (19.09.2017); Grayzel, p.36.
5. www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/Who-we-are/Museum-and-archives/Resources-for-researchers/Volunteers-and-personnel-records, (17/08/2017).
6. J. Swan, *Chelmsford in the Great War* (Barnsley, 2015), p.210.
7. www.redcross.org.uk/~media/BritishRedCross/Documents/Who%20we%20are/History%20and%20archives/Nursing%20during%20the%20First%20World%20War.pdf, (31/08/2017).

8. www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/Who-are-we/History-and-origin/First-World-War/Search, (14/09/2017).
9. Ibid.
10. K. Porter & S. Wynn, *Grays (Thurrock) in the Great War* (Barnsley, 2015), pp.92-3.
11. www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transforming-society/private-lives/your-country/overview/conscription, (10/08/2017).
12. www.friendsofhylandhouse.com/Hylands%20Military%20Hospital/, (17/08/2017).
13. Swan, p.211-2
14. Ibid, p.228.
15. K. Crowe, *Southend and the Great War, 1914-1918*, (Southend, 2014), p.43.
16. K. Crowe, 'The Great War Hospitals of Southend', *Essex Journal*, 50, I, p.33.
17. A. Phillips, *Colchester in the Great War*, (Barnsley, 2017), p.100.
18. P. Rusiecki, *The Impact of Catastrophe: the people of Essex and the First World War* (Chelmsford, 2008), p.125.
19. Phillips, p.100.
20. www.greatwarhomehospitals.wordpress.com, (17.08.2017).
21. N. Butler, *The Story of Wivenhoe* (Wivenhoe, 1989), p.211.
22. www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/Who-we-are/History-and-origin/First-World-War/Auxiliary-hospitals, (18/08/2017), for a full list of Auxiliary Hospitals throughout the country.
23. www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/Who-we-are/History-and-origin/First-World-War/Volunteers-during-WW1, (10/08/2017).
24. Crowe, 'Great War Hospitals', p.26.
25. www.greatwarhomehospitals.wordpress.com, (17/08/17).
26. Ibid.
27. S. Bhardwa, *The Rise of the VADs*, www.independentnurse.co.uk/professional-article/ww1-the-rise-of-the-vads/66221, (19/9/2017).
28. Ibid.
29. V. Brittain, *Testament of Youth* (London, 2014).
30. J. & C. Stevens (eds), *Unknown Warriors; The Letters of Kate Luard* (Stroud, 2017).
31. L. Gosling, *Great War Britain: The First World War at Home* (Stroud, 2014), p.53.
32. Phillips, p.100.
33. www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/Who-we-are/History-and-origin/First-World-War/Auxiliary-Hospitals, (10/08/2017); www.nationalarchive.gov.uk/currency/default0.asp#mid, (10/08/2017). It is incredibly difficult to translate money and its worth over time. The initial calculation was made on the website above, but the amount varies wildly depending on which criteria are used and which website is used, hence all other amounts mentioned are at their 1914-18 value.
34. Swan, p.211-2.
35. K. Porter & S. Wynn, *Laindon in the Great War* (Barnsley, 2014), p.23.
36. Phillips, p.80-3.
37. Porter & Wynn, *Grays*, p.92-3.
38. www.redcross.org.uk/~media/BritishRedCross/Documents/Who%20we%20are/History%20and%20archives/Fundraising%20during%20the%20First%20World%20War.pdf, (31/08/2017).
39. *Essex Newsman* (EN), 'War Fund Fraud', 08/12/1917, p.1, c.2.
40. EN, 'Money for the Wounded', 26/09/1914, p.2, c.7.
41. Essex Record Office (ERO), T/B 224/1/1, 2, Microfilm of Scrapbooks, Acc. A14491, Box 1, Scrapbook of Minna Bradhurst.
42. Rusiecki, p.127.
43. Ibid; *Chelmsford Chronicle* (CC), 'Death of Mrs W.B. Slaughter', 24/05/1935, p.10, c.5.
44. Crowe, 'Great War Hospitals', p.31.
45. Rusiecki, p.220.
46. CC, 'Cinderella Play at Barn Theatre', 18/08/1916, p.3, c.6.
47. ERO, Acc. A144191, Box 1, p.177, 'Gifts given to the Earls Colne Auxiliary Hospital'.
48. Rusiecki, p.221.
49. Swan, p.225.
50. P. Grant, *Philanthropy and Voluntary Action in the First World War: Mobilizing Charity* (London, 2014), p.3.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the Friends of Historic Essex, the Essex Record Office and the University of Essex for making my placement, and this article possible; to the ERO for allowing reproduction of the photographs; to Ken Crowe for reading my first draft and his encouraging comments; and to M, B & H for being who they are.

The Author

Caroline Wallace is an MA History student at the University of Essex. She is currently undertaking a research intern placement at the Essex Record Office looking at a scrapbook created during the First World War. Her historical interests lay primarily in twentieth century Europe and the US.

**Friends of Historic Essex – supporting the
Essex Record Office,
Leave a gift in your Will to carry
on research into the history of Essex.
Your Legacy to the Past for the Future
friendsofhistoricessex.org/contact/**

Book Reviews

Christopher Thornton, Jennifer Ward & Neil Wiffen (eds),
The Fighting Essex Soldier: recruitment, war and society in the fourteenth century, pp.xii & 177. ISBN 978-1-90929-188-1. Essex Publications, 2017, £18.99.

This is the second volume in the series, Essex Publications, which is an imprint of the University of Hertfordshire Press. The first was *Under Fire: Essex and the Second World War 1939-1945* by Paul Rusiecki.

It is a record of the papers that were given at a conference, *The Fighting Essex Soldier, War, Recruitment and Remembrance in the Fourteenth Century*, hosted by the Essex Record Office on 8th March 2014. Unfortunately, one of the contributions to the conference, that of Martin Stutchfield, on monumental brasses, is not represented in this volume (hence the slight difference in the titles), but he has provided several of the illustrations. David Simpkin's Chapter 4 is a revised version of an article first published in the *Essex Journal*.

The subject matter of the volume is quite tightly restricted to the recruitment of fighting men, their position in the society from which they came, and the relationship between their role in warfare and their activities at home. The contributions are sufficiently different from each other that there is little overlap, and they are all well-written. There is thus a unity to the book. It reads like a single study, not like a collection of disparate articles. For this, credit is due to the editors and to the organisers of the original conference. While this reviewer has indicated the contribution of each author, a great deal of what he has to say is about the book as a whole.

Christopher Thornton and Jennifer Ward have written an introductory chapter especially for the book. In it they encourage others to pursue detailed research into the period, remarking that it is simpler now that many of the key records are available in facsimile, and promising that administrative Latin and fourteenth century handwriting are not difficult to master. This reviewer wholeheartedly agrees with them in this.

The remaining chapters, with two exceptions, are the examples of the kind of detailed research into the identities and backgrounds of fighting men that is perhaps most associated with Anne Curry, whose work is indeed mentioned as one of the inspirations of the original conference. These chapters are as much about the sources and methodology used as about the information discovered.

Since the research in these chapters is primarily about recruitment, there is very little description of actual fighting, or campaigning, or about attitudes towards warfare. The word 'chivalry' appears only

twice, once to describe one element of Edward III's leadership style, and once in the context of a case in the Court of Chivalry. Whether or not fourteenth century society was as obsessed with it as literature makes out, it was peripheral to the serious business of putting armies together.

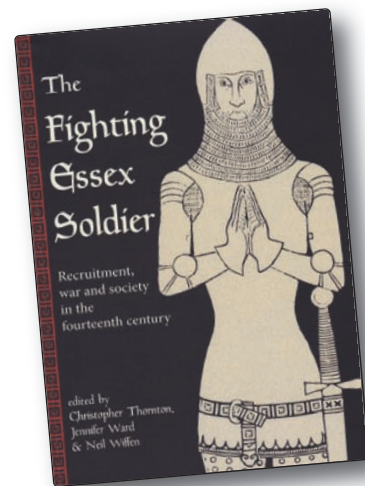
In Chapter 3, 'The contribution of Essex Gentry to the wars of Edward I and Edward II', David Simpkin

investigates the local members of a social class very heavily devoted to military service, knights as we commonly imagine them. On the other hand Chapter 2, 'Essex and the Hundred Years' War: taxation, justice and county families', by Jennifer Ward depicts a period, later in the century, when, for most men of the gentry class, warfare was usually at most only an occasional, or early-career experience, in a life increasingly devoted to county administration, law enforcement, and politics. The extent to which this represents a real change, or is due to the differing nature of the surviving evidence is debatable.

The title of the book is slightly misleading, as chapter 6, by Andrew Ayton and Craig Lambert, largely concerns the supply of ships for fighting fleets and for the transport of overseas expeditions, and the recruitment of mariners for their crews. One of the sources that the authors use is the unique Essex mariner survey of 1372. A surprising number of Essex seamen have been identified, and their service to the crown documented. An interesting finding is the apparently disproportionate number of ships and men supplied by the smaller settlements, such as, for instance, Fobbing. A number of reasons are suggested for this.

Some themes run through several of the individual contributions. There was a change in the way that archers were recruited during the course of the century. In the earlier years this was in large groups, separate from the retinues in which the armoured cavalry served. In later years mixed retinues were the norm, made up of archers, and men at arms (in this context meaning heavy cavalrymen who may or may not have been knighted). Does this reflect a loosening of the sense of social hierarchy such as is perceived to have led to the Peasants' revolt; or was it merely a farming out of the recruitment process?

Much, perhaps most, of the warfare of the Hundred Years' war, was economic in nature, aimed at disrupting the enemy's agriculture, trade and industry. The destructive intention of the English chevauchées in France is well known. Both sides also engaged in maritime raiding. Essex ships and seamen are noted as taking part. The French and their allies



Book Reviews

retaliated by coastal raids on England. Essex was lucky in that the worst of these were directed at other parts of the coast. However the inhabitants of the coastal areas of the county were expected to be ready fight off such attacks; and a raid in the Thames Estuary in 1380 is postulated as contributing to the grievances which led to the Peasants' revolt in the following year.

Chapter 5, 'The fighting men of Essex: service relationships and the poll tax', by Sam Gibbs is a detailed exploration of the extent to which it is possible to link names in the poll tax records to the names of archers, in surviving military records, and to draw conclusions about their backgrounds, and occupations in 'civilian' life. The chapter includes much statistical material. It also, incidentally, includes a description of the three poll taxes, which readers not greatly familiar with the period might find useful and interesting. One finding indicates that, of those Essex archers whose peacetime occupation has been identified, by far the greatest number were described as labourers, that is, presumably, agricultural workers, potentially quite skilled, but not landowners or tenants in their own right. This does not come as a surprise. They had no stake in land or trade to hold them back from volunteering, and could hope to return to their old occupation if and when they came back from the wars. The authors recognise a distinction, albeit a blurred one, between career archers and those who may have served in just one or two campaigns. Some men served for a very long time, and could properly be described as professional soldiers. For many, however, warfare was something to be experienced once, or alternated with years spent at home, as need or inclination required. Perhaps those archers who have been identified in the poll tax and who were described as landholders or craftsmen were just taking a career break, as we would put it, before resuming their place in civil society. Incidentally, the term 'yeoman', which used to be regularly associated by historians with the archetypal archer, appears nowhere in the lists of occupations.

Surprisingly, the idea that many men must have taken part in only one or two campaigns because they died in battle or of disease, and never came home, receives little consideration. The exception is the case of the seamen considered in chapter 6. The authors do acknowledge that men on the losing side in a sea battle stood very little chance of survival.

The authors generally allow themselves only a little speculation on the motives that induced gentry and archers to join up. Gloria Harris' chapter, 'Organised crime in fourteenth century Essex: Hugh de Badewe, Essex soldier and gang member', allows us to indulge in this ourselves. Society in England was violent, crime was rife, and much of it went virtually unpunished, even if the perpetrators were known. However criminal activity could have varying motives, which can often now only be guessed at. There was the simple desire to make a

livelihood and increase one's wealth by theft and extortion. Crime, particularly the armed poaching that Hugh engaged in, was an exciting group activity. Sometimes violent action was undertaken to settle grudges, or to make good perceived injustices or deficiencies in the law. (The middle ages were a litigious, as well as a violent time.) It must also be said that most descriptions of criminal activity derive from the victims. Most accusations are likely to have been exaggerated to some extent, and some may have been completely false.

A soldier's life, whether as a knight or as an archer, was perhaps perceived as being little more dangerous than that of any young laymen, but with the violence and mayhem being in a good cause, and with the added possibility of foreign travel, fame and fortune. It made use of fighting skills that may well have been acquired already at home. Indeed it was virtually compulsory to become a proficient archer. For the gentry, a life of occasional violent crime, interspersed with military service, could be followed in turn by acceptance, forgiveness, and a respected and useful position in county society. This is exactly the career path that Hugh followed.

Even if violent criminals were not exactly admired, their deeds did make a good story. The chapter begins by contrasting the romantic myth of Robin Hood with the actuality of fourteenth century crime. However the very earliest surviving stories about him depict a character much more violent and unpleasant than he later became, very like some of Hugh's worse contemporaries in fact. Hugh might even have been familiar with the stories himself. (The earliest reference to "rhymes of Robin Hood" is from the fourteenth century.)

The last chapter, 'Military Aspects of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381', by Herbert Eiden, is the only one which contains a significant element of speculation. The author concludes that the co-ordination which the rebels demonstrated in the early part of the revolt shows that their ranks must have included men with military experience. This reviewer ventures to suggest that the reason that the young king was able to take charge of the situation so quickly after the killing of Wat Tyler was in part because many of the rebels, as old soldiers, were instinctively used to obeying the orders of leaders if these were delivered with confidence and authority. If they were not, it is difficult to see how large formations of archers could have been handled in battle.

The book contains an extensive index, and a full bibliography of primary and secondary sources. Each chapter has a full set of references. There are 13 illustrations, including maps and four reproductions of memorial brasses of identified Essex knights. There are also 15 tables.

Richard Harris

Ray Clark,
**The Great British Woodstock:
 the incredible story of the
 Weeley Festival, 1971,**
 pp.144. 978-0-75096-989-5.
 History Press, 2017, £16.95.

As someone who has a great interest in the history of pop music and in the history of Essex, the Weeley Festival of 1971 has always seemed to be a wonderful confluence of these two themes.

I was barely a toddler in the summer of 1971, and probably wouldn't have been 'turned on' enough to go to Weeley even if I had been seventeen as Ray Clark was. The festival – as long as I have known about it – has for me therefore always had a mythical quality: something of which I have a limited understanding but which nevertheless inspires awe and wonder. Recordings and films from other festivals such as Woodstock and the Isle of Wight have cemented these events in the public imagination as seminal moments of popular culture. Whereas a lack of similar widely distributed evidence from the Weeley Festival (although apparently some recordings do exist) has had two effects. One is the relegation of Weeley to the 'second division' of such events, and the other is that it has been remembered in a less defined way.

There is a danger in attempting to investigate myths. Just as one's heroes, when you meet them, turn out to be flawed, the stories you build up in your mind can, when you uncover the facts, turn out to be less grand than the legend, or even merely mundane. But in this case the reality is every bit as extraordinary as you might imagine. It seems impossible that such an enormous counter-cultural event took place in such an unlikely place. And when you find out how it happened, it still seems almost unbelievable.

I have read a fair few pop music histories which left me feeling that I liked the subject less than

when I started. Some writers seem to be so proud of their research that they are compelled to leave none of it out. And there may be a place for such encyclopaedic accounts. For example, an appendix containing a list of all the bands that played at Weeley and the songs they performed might have been a valuable addition. But this is not an example of that kind of book.

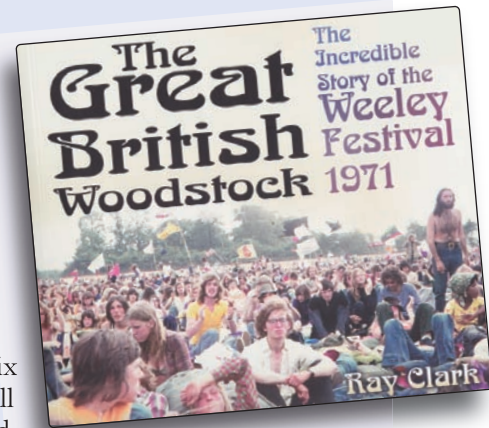
Ray Clark has clearly researched the subject well, drawing on archives, photographs and oral testimony to create an authentic account of the events behind the sensational headlines. But he does not let too many details get in the way of telling the story. This makes the book an entertaining and enjoyable read as well as a valuable historical resource.

The format and the numerous photographs from the event – both amateur and professional – make it attractive enough to serve a 'coffee table' function. But the text is meaty enough for it to be regarded as more than simply a picture book.

The use of oral accounts from organisers, attendees and Weeley residents adds greatly to the authenticity and the charm of the book. And the author has found a pleasing balance in the extent to which verbatim transcriptions from his interviews are used to add colour, detail and, often, humour to his account, resisting the temptation to rely too heavily on them.

I now know much more about the Weeley Festival than I did. But thanks to Ray Clark's affectionate treatment of the subject, it somehow maintains its mythical status, like a hazy summer dream. A worthy celebration of a unique event.

Martin Astell



Jane Greatorex,
**A Fresh Look at the First Three
 Aubrey de Veres, from Pre-Conquest
 to the First English Earldom,**
 pp.viii & 54. ISBN 978-0-95761-011-8.
 Published by the author, [n.d. 2016],
 £19.99.

Available from the author (washfarm90@hotmail.com.uk) or the Keep at Hedingham.

The tower-keep at Castle Hedingham, built by the de Veres, is probably the best known historical monument in Essex. Jane Greatorex

investigates the history of the family from the Norman Conquest, when Aubrey I de Vere came to England with William the Conqueror, to the death of Aubrey III de Vere in 1194. She provides excerpts and commentary from manuscripts, antiquarian writings and twentieth-century historical works to throw light on aspects of their lives in England. It is useful to have the primary evidence on the family but an assessment of its reliability would be helpful to the reader.

Section I is mainly concerned with the family's origins, the English estates granted by the Conqueror to Aubrey I and the foundation of Colne priory; Castle Hedingham became the centre of the de Vere lands. Section II discusses Aubrey II who

Book Reviews

succeeded his father in c.1112. Aubrey II possibly inherited the office of royal chamberlain, and in 1133 was granted the hereditary office of master chamberlain of England by Henry I, an office which continued to be held by the de Veres into the eighteenth century. Aubrey II served Henry I as an itinerant justice and sheriff of several counties, and he was prominent in royal government especially later in Henry I's reign. He may well have made a fortune from his work as justice and administrator. With the disputed succession in 1135 between Henry I's daughter Maud and her cousin Stephen, Aubrey II continued as an administrator to serve Stephen, but after Stephen's defeat and imprisonment by Maud in 1141 he changed sides. He was killed in a riot in London in May.

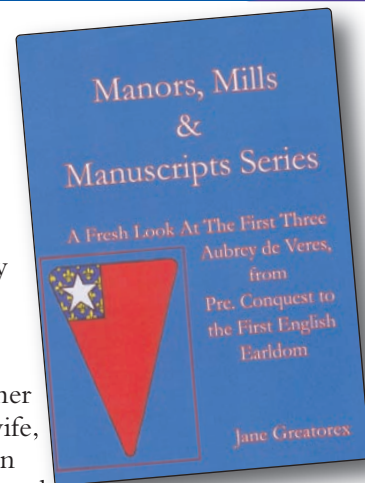
Section III concentrates on the career of Aubrey III who succeeded his father in 1141 and was granted the title of earl by Maud, a title confirmed by her son Henry II in 1156. As many of the counties already had earls by 1141, Aubrey was given a choice of four for his title out of which he chose Oxford. He probably supported Geoffrey de Mandeville, earl of Essex, until the latter's death in 1144, and then remained neutral for the rest of Stephen's reign; he supported the succession of Henry II in 1154. Historians have done much work on Stephen's reign and many charters have been re-dated; this work needs to be incorporated

into Section III so as to provide an up to date account of the mid-twelfth-century baronage.

Aubrey III added to the family's lands, making important acquisitions which enhanced the power of the family. He probably used his father's wealth to build the keep at Castle Hedingham. He made three marriages which are discussed in Section III together with his divorce from his third wife, Alice of Essex. The administration of his lands was much more informal than is suggested in the book. No lord had a formal council before the late thirteenth century. Lawyers, as a profession, are not found before the fourteenth century. In the twelfth century, the lord's followers were normally rewarded with land rather than money. It is misleading to use evidence from the later Middle Ages to describe twelfth-century organisation.

The book needs proof-reading. Footnotes lack page references, and spelling mistakes should be corrected. The name of William the Conqueror's eldest son was Robert Curthose, not Courthouse.

Jennifer Ward



Imogen Gray, **Clues in Fiction: An Essex Couple's Secret Ties,**

pp.166. ISBN 978-1-90526-921-1.

The Alderton Press, 2017. £6.50.

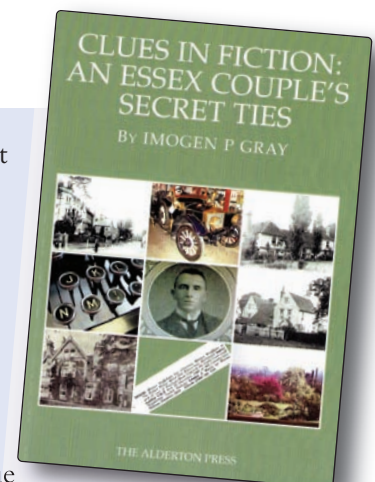
Available from: <http://theydon.org.uk/lhs/index.htm>.

The title of this book is very appropriate and accurately reflects its contents. It is principally about the lives and literary works of Horace and his wife Vera Newte formerly Vera Rasch. Horace was a well-known playwright and novelist around the Edwardian era, but is little known today. Vera was far less prolific, only writing two novels. The book is divided into two main halves with the life and work of Horace in the first half and Vera in the second.

The couple were part of a group of literary and intellectual people who settled in Loughton and surrounding area. Here they enjoyed the beautiful countryside but were close to London. Although their books were fiction, when analysed they include Essex settings, which can still be identified over a century later. The influence of both authors' ancestors during the previous couple of centuries was detected in some of their fictional stories. Imogen Gray should be congratulated for meticulously researching the history of the Newte

and Rasch families and for analysing the novels to highlight similarities, connections and coincidences. Some of Vera Newte's Rasch ancestors achieved success in the military and commerce, whilst her maternal ancestors, the West family, included high-ranking naval officers.

Readers of *Essex Journal* will recall that the autumn 2016 issue contained a review of Georgina Green's book, *Sir Charles Raymond of Valentines and the East India Company*. There is a double relationship between the Raymond and Newte families, which is clearly shown in the second of three family trees in the appendices. The Rev Samuel Newte married Isabella Tanner, who was Sir Charles's aunt and their grandson, Captain Thomas Newte married Anna Maria Raymond, daughter of Sir Charles and were the great grandparents of Horace Newte. Additional information is recorded about the Honourable East India Company, its ships and personnel. There are eight appendices of which the first details Thomas Newte's connections with the Honourable East India Company and ships for which he was a principal managing owner. Another appendix lists the key places of residence of Horace Newte with dates and sources,



Book Reviews

which include Theydon Bois, Upminster and Loughton.

Horace and Vera had one child, a daughter, Iris, born 1899, who died in 1900 and was buried at Loughton. Their marriage ended in 1912 when they separated but it was not until 1917 that their divorce was finalised upon Horace's petition against Vera for her adultery with Percy Keen, the chauffeur, who she later married. The divorce was described as sensational and both marriage and divorce became subjects in some of Horace's later novels. Following Vera's second marriage, she wrote two novels, under the name of Vera Keen, which were

based upon incidents in her life and she died in 1953. Horace never remarried and later became an outspoken, but well-liked columnist for the *Daily Mirror* newspaper and died in 1949.

The book has an attractive colour cover and is well illustrated with a centre section of nearly 30 well-chosen photographs of the Newte and Rasch families and the homes they occupied. This is another valuable addition to the impressive publications list under the imprint of Loughton and District Historical Society.

Adrian Corder-Birch

Robert Burrell,
**Victorian Freemasonry and the
Building of Tilbury Docks,**
pp.vii & 159. ISBN 978-0-95583-529-2.
Thurrock Local History Society, 2015,
£12.99.

Available to EJ subscribers at the special price of £9.99 + p&tp. Just contact publications@thurrock-history.org.uk and mention this review.

The great economic depression of the last 2½ decades of the nineteenth century not only plunged huge numbers of British workers and their families into unemployment, penury and hardship but also threatened the viability of well-established enterprises.

In London, there were two rival dock companies competing against each other in difficult and changing times:

1. The East and West India Dock Co., formed by a merger between the East India Dock Co and West India Dock Co. in 1836;
2. The London & St Katherine's Dock Co, formed by a merger between the London Dock Co, St Katherine Dock Co, and the Victoria Dock Co, in 1864.

In 1874, the London & St Katherine's Dock Co. began work on the construction of the ultra-modern Albert Dock which, on completion in 1880, could take the largest ships and turn them round more speedily than any other dock. The Company then had twice the dock capacity of its rival, the East & West India Dock Co.

The Chairman of the latter said at a meeting that unless they adopted a scheme to move down the river to Tilbury, they might as well vote for liquidation.

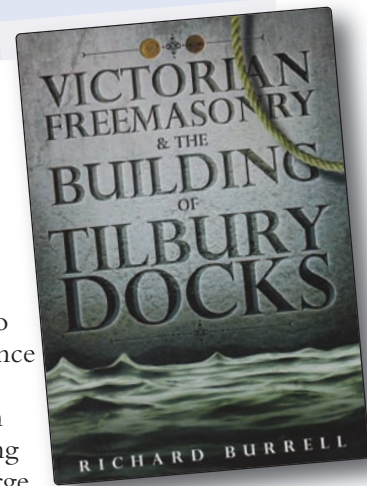
Consequently, the East & West India Dock Co embarked on the construction of docks at Tilbury covering 56 acres of water with three miles of quays and four dry docks capable of taking the largest ships afloat. The key to its success was the prior existence of a railway system that could carry freight and passengers on to London before ships docking upstream had begun to discharge.

The author of this book, a former Worshipful Master of Tilbury Lodge of Freemasons, explains that the principal engineers engaged on the project were Freemasons and, in 1883, formed Tilbury Lodge. He names the seven founders: Frank Kirk, Joseph Randall, Augustus Manning, Donald Stuart Baynes, Alexander John Dudgeon, John Morgan Ross and John James Hamilton, and gives a biography of each of them.

The competition between the two rival dock companies led, in 1888, to their amalgamation into the London & India Docks Co, which lasted until the formation of the Port of London Authority. However, while Tilbury is still in operation its upstream rivals have all been closed. It is noteworthy that the author does not mention the Dockers' Tanner Strike of 1889, which paralysed the port shortly after Tilbury began operations. Clearly, the competition led to a tight squeeze on labour costs.

Although the links with freemasonry are incidental to the main theme of this book, it provides a valuable account of dock development on the Thames in the Victorian period – which was crucial to the urbanisation of southern Essex. Anyone interested in the area will find this book a worthwhile read.

Stan Newens.



Your Book Reviewers are: Martin Astell, Sound Archivist at the Essex Record Office and pop music enthusiast; Adrian Corder-Birch, current President of the Essex Society for Archaeology & History and Chairman of the EJ Editorial Board; Richard Harris, former Archive Service Manager at the Essex Record Office; Stan Newens, a former politician and member of the EJ Editorial Board and Jennifer Ward, a historian of medieval England, women and Essex.

Dorothy Lockwood

Dorothy Lockwood was born in 1927 and adopted at birth, she had a happy though solitary childhood. Aged 12 she was evacuated to Ipswich on the outbreak of WW2 and subsequently Finnamore Wood Camp, Marlow. Returning to Goodmayes her father insisted she attend Mulley's commercial school in Ilford – this has been useful all her life. She married at 24 and with four children, her husband George Thomas (Tom) sadly died aged 42. Shortly after she began work as a school secretary and continued in this job until her retirement. Dorothy met Bert Lockwood at their local church, they married and she shared his interest in local history and athletics. They were both active members of numerous local history societies and Dorothy is proud to currently be a Vice-President of three societies – Barking, Ilford and Woodford. She has just celebrated her 90th birthday with family and friends and is truly grateful for a fulfilled life.

1. What is your favourite historical period?

The Victorians, they took more trouble to dress.

2. Tell us what Essex means to you? A County of changing scenes including the London Boroughs – always somewhere interesting to visit.

3. What historical mystery would you most like to know? What happened to Lord Lucan.

4. My favourite history book is... *The Journal of Beatrix Potter* from 1881 to 1897 transcribed from her code writings by Leslie Linder.

5. What is your favourite place in Essex? The RHS garden at Hyde Hall, Rettendon.

6. How do you relax? Five minutes weeding in the garden.

7. What are you researching at the moment?

My researching days are over though I appreciate knowing what evidence has recently been found relating to various historical/archaeological situations.

8. My earliest memory is... Standing in the back garden at home in Goodmayes wearing a paper crown & carrying a wand to enter a Cow & Gate competition.

9. What is your favourite song/piece of music and why? 'What is Life to me without thee' sung by Kathleen Ferrier CBE (1912-53) – that glorious contralto voice. Her early death was a tragedy.

10. If you could travel back in time which event would you change? I wouldn't, every generation has unacceptable events that is how the world revolves.

11. Which four people from the past would you invite to dinner? Queen Victoria, Sir Winston Churchill, Humphrey Repton, and Kathleen Ferrier.



12. What is your favourite food? Salmon – fresh, tinned or paste!

13. The history book I am currently reading is... *The Local Historian*, published quarterly by The British Association for Local History.

14. What is your favourite quote from history? 'I said to the Man who stood at the gate of the year 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown'

And he replied, 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way!"

By Minnie Louise Haskins, and spoken by King George VI during his Christmas broadcast to the Empire 1939.

15. Favourite historical film? *The Dam Busters*, 1955 starring Michael Redgrave and Richard Todd.

16. What is your favourite building in Essex? The Hospital Chapel of St Mary the Virgin and St Thomas of Canterbury, Ilford founded c.1145 by Adelicia, Abbess of Barking as a hospice for 13 aged and infirm men.

17. What past event would you like to have seen? The visit of Pope John Paul II to the U.K in 1982, the first visit by a reigning Pope.

18. How would you like to be remembered? As someone capable of understanding other people's lives and problems.

19. Who inspires you to read or write or research history? My late husband Herbert Hope Lockwood.

20. Most memorable historical date? England winning the World Cup in 1966.



Friends of Historic Essex

*Supporting the Essex Record Office
and historical research in Essex*

Join the Friends of Historic Essex to help support one of the best county record offices in England. By becoming a member for just £12 a year you will help us to:

- Purchase documents for preservation at the Essex Record Office
- Conserve documents at the Essex Record Office so they can be made available to researchers now and in the future
- Publish books and copies of historic maps
- Purchase materials for education activities
- Support researchers working on Essex history

To join, please contact us through our website:

www.friendsofhistoricessex.org

Or write to us at Friends of Historic Essex, c/o Essex Record Office,
Wharf Road, Chelmsford, CM2 6YT

 Follow us on Twitter @HistoricEssex

Founded 1954

Registered Charity No. 235270