

Essex JOURNAL

A REVIEW OF LOCAL HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

Spring 2013

MICHAEL LEACH DISCUSSES THE AUTHOR BEHIND THE GENTLEMAN'S HISTORY OF ESSEX



Wale Delin

ESSEX, Represented by a Female Figure with the Arms of the County by her Side, Unrolling a Map of the County, shewing its Curiosity & Agriculture, with Ancient & Modern Buildings, as well as the Produce & Manufactures.

EJ 20 Questions:
Geoffrey Hare

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Writing this on a lovely late spring (or is it early summer?) morning it is hard to remember just how long it took for this last winter to end. Even into April there were days when I thought that the sun was never really going to shine out hot again and even this last week or so I've had to revert to gloves and scarf when cycling into work. To quantify the extent of the cold the Met Office have a data set which stretches back to 1910 and they have suggested that this last March will be the coldest since 1962 with only 1962 and 1947 being colder in the last century. I'm sure that these winters will be remembered by some of you reading this. While many of us now have the luxury of central heating and double glazing I expect that many tales can be told of ice on the inside of windows, blankets and coats being piled on beds to keep warm and the lack of coal and fuel, especially in 1947. So we have much to be grateful for.

One joy of the delayed spring has been the delight with which I have enjoyed the blossom on trees in my garden, starting off with the plums, followed by the pears, cherries and apples and finally now the quinces. The delight I felt in them brought to mind the bitter-sweet poem II in Houseman's *A Shropshire Lad*:

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

Moving on to the current issue, I'm sure that you will have noticed that the advert for the Castle Bookshop in Colchester is no longer on the front inside cover. This is because it has closed which is a great shame. It supported the *Essex Journal* for many years and for which I wish to express the gratitude of the Editorial Board.

In this issue there are a wide ranging selection of articles. Julian Whybra has written a piece on the Mersea Strood, a stretch of road which I'm sure many of us are familiar with. Jason Townsend discusses the work of the Portable Antiquities Scheme which plays an important role in recording random archaeological finds. Jason has generously offered to assist with producing the *EJ* and so I have been liaising with him over formatting articles etc. Hopefully over the next few months he will be able to get to grips with the Desk Top Publishing side of things.

Michael Leach has written a very interesting piece

on the identity of the 'gentleman' author of the *History of Essex* (1769-72). I am certainly very used to telling people that Muilman is the author but now we will have to consider another name – read on. Following on from the article on the medieval Takeley deeds in the autumn 2012 issue, the Essex



Record Office's Senior Conservator, Tony King, discusses their cleaning, conservation and repackaging. I hope you will find this a fascinating glimpse at what goes on behind the scenes at ERO.

Alan Tritton brings his own view of his family history which he has been researching. A colourful account of an Essex family which has had its fair share of tragedy. Next Ken Crowe introduces us to some further archaeological work that has been carried out at Prittlewell Priory while Roger Kennell shares some initial research into the pioneering diver James Bushell of north-east Essex.

It is with sadness that two obituaries are included in this issue. I'm sure that many of you will have known the 98 year old John Boyes. I met him at the relaunch of the *Essex Journal* back in 2007 at Ingatestone Hall. He was very pleased with the new initiative and was very supportive and encouraging. Adrian Corder-Birch, our Chairman, pays tribute to him. It was a great shock to hear that Rob Brooks had died. It was always a pleasure to see Rob at the ERO and he was always happy to have a chat and a laugh. I had many conversations with him about woodlands, wood-banks and parks. He had a great sense of humour and I remember him describing to me, with some evident pride, improvements that we're being made to his garden. An area of paving had been laid and he joked that Anne, his wife, wouldn't let him call it a common 'patio' – it had to be a terrace, so much more middle-class! I happened to be having some paving laid at the back of my house at the time and I have always referred to it as a terrace in honour of Rob. Our thoughts go to Anne and family for their loss.

Following on from assorted book reviews Geoffrey Hare, who has done so much to promote the work of the Essex Victoria County History, kindly shares his answers to the *EJ 20 Questions*.

While there is not much tree blossom to go now, I do hope that you make time to go about woodlands and gardens to enjoy those flowers that are to come. Have a good summer,

Cheerio,

Neil

THE PLUME LECTURE 2013

Saturday 16th November

The Trustees of Thomas Plume's Library are pleased to announce that this year's lecture will be given by Robert C. Kennicutt, Jr. FRS, Plumian Professor of Astronomy and Experimental Philosophy and Director of the Institute of Astronomy, University of Cambridge. The title of his talk will be announced at a later date on the Library's website:

<http://www.thomasplumeslibrary.co.uk/>

One of Thomas Plume's many interests was astronomy and this is reflected in his library, which contains many of the most important works available at the time. Plume could well have acquired this interest during his time as Vicar of Greenwich, which included the period from 1675 when the Royal Observatory was created.

When Thomas Plume died in 1704 one of his many bequests was £1904 'to erect an Observatory and to maintain a studious and learned Professor of Astronomy and Experimental Philosophy and to buy him and his successors utensils, instruments, quadrants, telescopes, etc...' at Cambridge University.

This will not be the first time that astronomy has been the subject of the Plume Lecture. In 1991 Professor A. Boksenberg, Director of the Royal Greenwich Observatory delivered a lecture entitled *To the edge of the Universe* and in 1976 Professor Martin Rees, Plumian Professor, (now Lord Rees, Astronomer Royal) spoke about *Stars and the Universe*.

The lecture will take place on Saturday 16th November 2013 at 7.30 pm in the United Reformed Church, Market Hill, Maldon, CM9 4PZ. There is no entry charge and advance booking is not necessary.

**Thomas Plume's
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News from the Essex Record Office

As part of our 75th anniversary celebrations this year we are asking our users to nominate their favourite ERO document (or documents if you have more than one!) We have received some great entries so far, and have started publishing them on our blog (www.essexrecordofficeblog.co.uk), and will also use some in displays at our open day on Saturday 14th September. We have published two of the nominations so far; a photograph of Elizabeth Greenwood (b.1788) nominated by Rosalind Kaye because it is amazing to have a photograph of someone born in the eighteenth century, and a letter relating to the death sentence of William Palmer for stealing sheep in 1819, nominated by Kate Masheder. William's death left his young wife, Kate's great-great-great-grandmother, with eight children to care for. If you would like to nominate your own favourite ERO document we'd love to hear from you. Either pick up a nomination form in the Searchroom, download one from the blog, or e-mail me, hannahjane.salisbury@essex.gov.uk. Entries can be just a few lines, and can be for any reason you like.

Back in February, we welcomed 77 first year students from the University of Essex to the ERO to introduce them to the archive and to show how they could use the ERO's collections in their own work. We took the students on behind-the-scenes tours, showed them a selection of documents, introduced them to the Essex Sound and Video Archive, and finally set a mini research task for them to complete in the Searchroom. The feedback from the students about their visits was overwhelmingly positive; before the visits 51 of them said they would not use the ERO for their work, but after the visits 55 of them said that they had changed their minds and would visit us again. The students said that after the visits they felt more confident using primary sources in an archive, and we hope to see many of them in the future when their turn to write dissertations rolls around. The *EJ*'s own Neil Wiffen is off to Belfast at the end of June to talk about the project at a conference being held by the Archive Learning and Education Section of the Archives and Records

Association, and it's great that the ERO will be contributing to the archives sector on a national level.

In the last *EJ* we mentioned a map of Saffron Walden dating from 1757 which had been discovered in a farm outbuilding. It is the oldest known map of this historic Essex town, and after months of careful conservation work we took the map back up to Saffron Walden for a special event in March. The day was a huge success, with over 500 people coming to see the map and associated displays. We had also provided activity packs to local Scouts and Cubs based on the map to help them explore their local history, and we hear that over 50 of them have earned their Local Heritage badges. Several of them kindly provided us with very ingenious display material on the day based on their explorations of the town's history.

Our next major event is *Essex's Industrial Archaeology*, a one-day conference, in conjunction with the Essex Society for Archaeology and History, on Saturday 6th July. Our speakers will be covering a topics including Marconi's in Chelmsford, Courtauld's in Braintree, Beeleigh Steam Mill near Maldon and workers' housing all over the county. Tickets are £15 including refreshments and a buffet lunch, and can be booked by telephoning 01245 244614. There are more details on a dedicated page on our blog, which can be found at:

www.essexrecordofficeblog.co.uk/industrial_archaeology

As well as the conference we have plenty of workshops and lectures – and our open day to celebrate our 75th anniversary – coming up over the rest of the year. You can find details of all of them at: www.essex.gov.uk/EROevents

You can keep up with the ERO by joining the e-bulletin to receive monthly updates. To be added to the mailing list, e-mail me, hannahjane.salisbury@essex.gov.uk, with 'e-bulletin' as the subject.

We hope to see you at the ERO soon!

Hannah Salisbury, Audience Development Officer



Building Up a Picture of Local History

by

Jason Townsend

For many, archaeology and buried treasure is something seen on TV and confined to the realms of academics. However, there is much to be said for the amateur – whether walking the dog along the edge of a field or wondering with a metal detector.¹ Indeed much can be said for the amateur with a metal detector – like the Norfolk lad who unearthed a WWII bomb with the metal detector he got as a present this last Christmas,² or the Australian man who has recently unearthed a 5.5Kg solid Gold Nugget.³

The end of the twentieth century witnessed two important developments in the protection and recording of archaeological artefacts. The 1996 Treasure Act and the creation of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) in 1997 were set up to protect our archaeological heritage but in their running they also have much of value to offer the academic and amateur alike. The Treasure Act stipulates that if you discover buried treasure (as defined in the legislation), the coroner is able to set a value and offer the treasure for sale to museums and if purchased, the value is divided between the finder and the landowner (if

different). The PAS provides a means for the identification and recording of objects that you find or have found with archaeological significance. It has the potential to help build up a more detailed picture of local history than ever before and hopefully it means that many more artefacts will end up in the museums.

The Portable Antiquities Scheme

Every year, a report is compiled into the records created and finds reported through the scheme. The report for 2012 has not yet been completed but the 2011 report⁴ shows some interesting figures; in 2011 Essex had the highest number of treasure cases in the country at 91.

Number of finds reported in Essex

2009	2010	2011	2012
2,292 ⁵	1,607 ⁶	2,580 ⁷	1,432 ⁸

The annual reports have a more detailed breakdown of finds across Essex and the rest of the country. They are available for download from the PAS website.⁹

Some 80% of all finds recorded in 2011 across the country were metal objects and over half of them were coins. An example

of a notable find in Essex from 2010 (pictured) is an Iron-age Gold coin from 125 to 100BC in date. This demonstrates the usefulness of the metal-detector. It's important that all finds are reported though because there is only so much that we can garner from metal finds.

My father recently found an interesting object whilst turning the soil on his vegetable patch in Dunmow Road, Thaxted. The item was a broken Brooch (pictured). I sent photographs and a detailed description of the item and location to the Essex Finds Liaison Officer (at the time Laura McLean). The information was sent to Helen Geake (of Channel 4's *Time Team*), who was a Finds Advisor. Laura had this to say about the find:

'The brooch appears to be cast in copper alloy and it is of an annular (circular ring) type that is common in the medieval period. Part of the frame is narrowed (just visible on your example from where it has broken) and this is where the end part of the pin would have been attached via looping the end of the presumably copper alloy pin around it. There is sometimes a notch in the opposite side of the frame to secure the pin, however from your photograph this does not appear to be the case with your example. The engraving on your piece looks to be of good quality workmanship with some detailed decoration in the spaces between letters.'¹⁰

Helen had this to say on the piece:

'What you have there is half of a very nice medieval

Continental Iron Age Gallo-Belgic AB1 gold stater.
(© Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service.)



annular brooch engraved with letters reading

I h E S V S n A Z.

The whole thing would originally have read 'Ihesus Nazarenus' - Jesus of Nazareth - with possibly room for 'Rex' (king) at the end. Annular brooches with letters engraved on them are well known from the medieval world, but they are often not as clearly engraved as yours - sometimes the letters don't make any sense at all. When you can read them, this inscription is definitely the most popular. It's a shortening of Ihesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum (Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews) - this is the meaning of the letters INRI found above the crucified figures of Jesus. If you look [at] J. Evans, *Magical Jewels*, (1922), you will find on p.127 that there is a 14th-century instruction to make a ring from five pennies (these would be of silver at this date) and to inscribe it with this motto. A silver brooch with this inscription - but not big enough to have been made from five pennies! - has been found in excavations in London, in a context dated to the late fourteenth century, and so the weight of evidence suggests that these brooches are broadly of this date."¹¹

So it looks like my father had unearthed a fourteenth century Brooch with religious inscription. From a local history point of view, could this Brooch be related to use of the now demolished chapel that stood a few doors up on Dunmow Road in Thaxted? Or could it be linked with the daily processions of monks (from the nearby abbey at Tilty), along Dunmow Road to the Parish church in Thaxted? We'll never be able to say with any certainty but certainly every find adds to the larger picture of local history.

Essex has a very rich and extensive past, having been a hub for trade for millennia. We can all help to document this tapestry of the past by reporting our finds to the Finds Liaison Officer for Essex.

Take a look at the current catalogue of finds by going to:

finds.org.uk

You can contact the Finds Liaison Officer for Essex (currently Katie Marsden), on:

katie.marsden@colchester.gov.uk

or 01206 506 961.

References

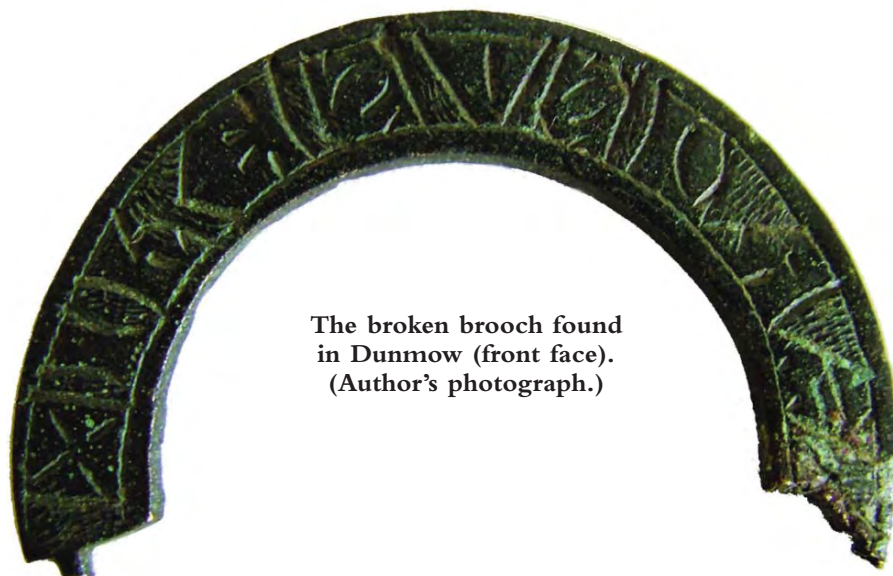
1. Permission must be sought from the landowner if metal detecting is to take place.
2. BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-20872004>, (14/03/2013).
3. BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-21055206>, (14/03/2013).
4. Figure calculated from information on the PAS website; <http://finds.org.uk>, (14/03/2013). Note the number of finds recorded in 2012 was down on previous years because the position of Finds Liaison Officer was vacant between the end of May and the end of November in 2012.
5. The annual reports for the PAS, can be downloaded from: <http://finds.org.uk/news>, (14/03/2013).
6. M. Lewis, *Portable Antiquities Scheme Annual Report 2009 & 2010*, (British Museum).
7. M. Lewis, *Portable Antiquities Scheme Annual Report 2011*, (British Museum).
8. Portable Antiquities Scheme, <http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/474991>, (14/03/2013).
9. Portable Antiquities Scheme, <http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/273300>, (14/03/2013).
10. Email to author, (10/11/2009).
11. Email to author, (01/11/2009).

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I would like to thank Helen Geake, Laura McLean and Katie Marsden for their contributions, without which this article would not have been written.

The Author

Jason Townsend has a background in computer science but has a passion for history and archaeology, in particular local history. He is a woodcarver who finds historical woodworking of considerable inspiration. Jason does not have an interest in any particular historical period but rather an interest in the evolving story of individual sites.



**The broken brooch found in Dunmow (front face).
(Author's photograph.)**

The Saxon Strood to Mersea Island

by
Julian Whybra

The only road on to Mersea Island, which rises from marsh level to as high as 70 feet, crosses the ancient causeway known as the Strood (originally pronounced 'strode'). The historian Thomas Wright wrote an elegant description of Mersea in 1836 which is just as valid today as it was then:

'The island is inaccessible from the land side except by a causeway called the Strode, which crosses the Pyefleet creek, and is covered by the sea at high water. The island is well-wooded and beautifully diversified with hill and dale; it has a bold commanding coast towards the German ocean, but on the north-west and south is low and flat, with a great extent of salt marshes.'¹

There are extensive Roman remains on Mersea and it was long assumed that the Strood was Roman. However, archaeological work undertaken in 1978-80

proved conclusively that the causeway was Saxon, dating from between A.D. 684 and 702.² In 1978 contractors who were digging a trench on the Strood for a water main discovered oak piles underneath earlier levels of roadway. Tree-ring analysis and radiocarbon dating confirmed their late seventh-century date whilst no evidence was found of an earlier pre-East Saxon (i.e. Roman) causeway. Some three to five thousand oak piles would have been needed to build the causeway, the only known example of its kind in Anglo-



Aerial view of the Strood.
(© Copyright Terry Joyce and licensed for reuse under the Creative Commons Licence.)

Saxon England, making it a major construction project of its time. This can only have required organization and sanction by the 'state', namely the King of the East Saxons, Sæbbi, who ruled 664 x 694. Bede wrote of Sæbbi that 'He devoted himself to religious exercises, frequent prayer, and acts of mercy, and he preferred a retired monastic life to all the riches and honours of a kingdom.'³ It is highly probable that St. Peter's Church, West Mersea, was in existence at that time⁴ and was operating as a minster church; the causeway may well have been built to enable the priests to cross to the mainland dry-shod and, perhaps, to ease Sæbbi's journey to the minster which he used as a retreat. St. Peter's dates mainly from the fourteenth century but its foundation is traditionally claimed to date back to St. Cedd in the 650s⁵ and the main part of the tower is pre-Conquest, some of the brick coursing being set in typically Saxon herring-bone pattern.



Map of Mersea Island and the Strood. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office, 1:25,000 Provisional Edition Ordnance Survey, sheet 62/01, c.1950.)

Roman remains⁶ and finds on Mersea are of course well-attested, many of the latter coming from the area of the Strood itself. So, how did the Romans become so well established on Mersea if the Strood did not exist? The answer lies in a study of sea-level changes. In the Anglo-Saxon period there was a worldwide, eustatic rise in the mean sea level (known as submergence or marine transgression) as water from the ice caps and glaciers returned to the sea, leading to flooding of the land whereas during the Roman Occupation of Britain there had been a lowering of the mean sea level (known as emergence) and a consequent drying out of local coastal areas. The subject is complex, as it involves not just climatic changes but questions of silting, man's own interference with the shoreline, and tectonic plate movements (which are still continuing); nevertheless, the graph below plots sea-level changes in the North Sea area (with possible extremes shown by the dotted line). It shows an emergence of the land at the height of the Roman Occupation of at least 6 1/2 - 8 1/2 feet and a submergence of the land of up to 9 1/2 feet during the period of Anglo-Saxon settlement (compared to current mean sea levels).⁷ The Romans would have been able to cross to Mersea virtually, or possibly completely, dry-shod. Indeed, for most of the Roman period it may not have been an island at all, but a peninsula, and would have been served by a roadway not unlike that which is visible at low tide at Northey or Osea Islands.

In the Anglo-Saxon period Mersea was an island for the new settlers named it *Meres ieg*, 'island in the pool'⁸ and they named the tide-dependent crossing connecting it to the mainland *Strod*, 'marshy land overgrown with brushwood',⁹ a name which stuck when they decided to build the oak-piled causeway at the end of the seventh century.



The Strood at spring tide.
(© Copyright Simon Frost and licensed for reuse under the Creative Commons Licence.)

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1. T. Wright, *The History and Topography of the County of Essex*, II, (London, 1836), p.742.
2. P. Crummy, J. Hillam & C. Crossan, 'Mersea Island: The Anglo-Saxon Causeway', *Essex Archaeology and History*, XIV, (1982), p.77.
3. Bede (The Venerable), *A History of the English Church and People*, trans. by L. Sherley-Price, IV (London, 1968), p.11.
4. On the south wall near the vestry door there is a piece of carved Saxon stone with sculpted interlace pattern measuring 17 3/4" x 6". This is a relic from the previous Saxon church which stood on this site.
5. N Scarfe, *Essex*, (London, 1968), p.139; *The Parish Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, West Mersea*, (West Mersea, 1984).

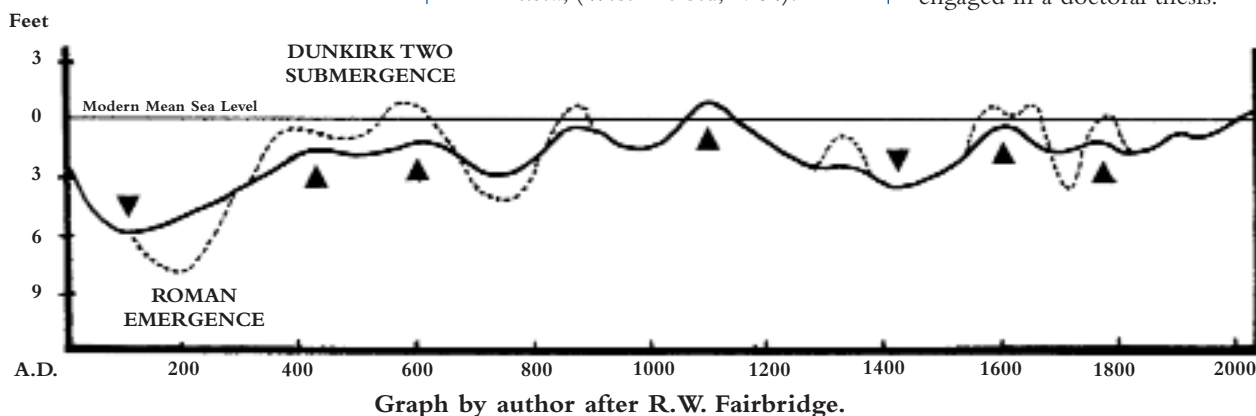
6. These include a villa east of the church (much of which was built with re-used Roman brick and rubble), mosaics (found here in 1720), and a Romano-British burial mound at The Mount, not to mention the legend of the ghost of the Roman sentry on the Strood itself!
7. For a general examination of changes in mean sea level see R.W. Fairbridge, 'The Changing Level of the Sea', *Scientific American*, 202 [5], (1966), and 'Mean Sea-level Changes, Long-term, Eustatic, and Other', *Encyclopædia of Oceanography*, (New York, 1966); for a more specific examination of English coastal and North Sea changes see D. Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England*, (Oxford, 1981), pp.10-11, and R.L.S Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial*, (London, 1975).
8. The earliest recorded form of the name, *Meres ig(e)*, can be dated to A.D. 895. See P.H. Reaney, *The Place-names of Essex*, (Cambridge, 1935), p.319.
9. A.H. Smith, *English Place-name Elements*, II, (Cambridge, 1987), p.164.

Acknowledgements

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The Author

Julian Whybra is a history graduate of the University of East Anglia and has carried out post-graduate research as a Research Fellow at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow and as a Fellow Commoner at Girton College, Cambridge. He lectured part-time in history in the Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Essex until 2005 and is a past winner of the Browne Medal for Original Research in Military History. He is currently engaged in a doctoral thesis.



The Gentleman's History of Essex;

the enigma of its authorship resolved?

by

Michael Leach

Curiosity often creates too anxious a concern in us, to know the AUTHOR of any piece that makes its appearance: nay there are some who condemn a publication unread, because it bears not the signature of a great man. But when it is considered how far prejudice and party now a days have ascendancy over us, it will not seem unjustifiable that this history is without one.

The works of many an ingenious man have been despised entirely on account of the author's name being known; which otherwise would have received that praise they deservedly merited. But by giving his name he subjects himself to the malicious and inveterate satire of every anonymous writer who will condescend to abuse him.

The considerate reader will ever look upon the title page with indifference, relying on the merit of the work itself for that satisfaction, which the sanction of a name can neither give, or take away.

This defensive justification from the editor, inserted at the beginning of the first volume of *The Gentleman's History of Essex*, has successfully concealed the author's identity for nearly 250 years, though the name of Peter Muilman is usually inserted in bibliographies. This assumption is understandable, particularly as Muilman's name appeared at the foot of the preface in the first volume. Further confusion may have arisen from his manuscript autobiography (printed in full in 1896 in the *Essex Review*) in which he referred to himself as the 'author' of the *History*.¹ However it may be that he used the word 'author' in the broader sense of 'originator' rather than implying that he was the writer. In 1899, the Essex historian and editor of the *Essex Review*, E.A. Fitch, evaluated all the available evidence, and concluded that 'the *raison d'être* and the authorship of this important topographical work, which obtained upon its publication the large number of 508 subscribers, alike remain obscure'.² This essay will attempt to throw some new light on this enigma.

The six octavo³ volumes of the *History* were published in parts between 1769 and 1772, most of them being printed in Chelmsford by Lionel Hassall. Muilman's preface to the *History*,

dated September 1773, was written after the completion of the final part, and was intended to be inserted by the binder at the front of the first volume (Fig. 1). This made it clear that he was not the author, stating 'In the Writing-Part I have very little contributed, except in my own Parishes of the Heddinghams and the Yeldhams, where my Property lies.' The other introductions and dedications which were bound into the first volume show that the 'author' and the 'editor' were separate individuals, but shed no light on Muilman's exact involvement with the publication. Nearly a decade later, Richard Gough described the *History* as an abridgement of Morant's work with 'some inconsiderable additions made under the patronage and direction of Peter Muilman esq.' William Upcott's topographical entry, doubtless copied from Gough, provided a similar observation about Muilman's role.⁴

Peter Muilman

In order to assess Muilman's involvement with the *History*, it is necessary to know more about the man himself. He was born into a wealthy merchant family in Amsterdam (probably in 1707 or 1708) and, in about 1722, he was sent to England by his father to join his older brother Henry as a partner. The business appears to

have covered a wide range of imported and exported goods, including ships' masts, iron and hide.⁵ In 1733 he married Mary Chiswell, heiress of Richard Chiswell, Turkey merchant, MP and director of the Bank of England, whose country seat was Debden Hall in north Essex. Whether by trade, or marriage, or both, Muilman became a very wealthy man. He acquired Kirby Hall in Castle Heddingham (Fig. 2), as well as extensive property in the Yeldhams, and left the vast sum of some £350,000 at his death in 1790.⁶ In spite of his wealth, and though he had been naturalised, he was debarred by law from public office and was unable to follow his father-in-law into Parliament. As a result he used his energy, as well as his own money, to facilitate a variety of worthy public projects in his adopted county, of which he was said to be inordinately proud. One example was his active encouragement of Morant's work, fulsomely acknowledged by that author.⁷ Other causes that he supported included provision of a new organ in Chelmsford's parish church, the active encouragements of the town's musical life and an unsuccessful attempt in 1772 to revive the stalled proposal to make the River Chelmer navigable, a project which he offered to finance. He also anonymously



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1. Frontispiece and title page from volume 1 of *A New and Complete History of Essex* by a Gentleman. (This and subsequent illustrations reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office.)

subsidised the lighting and paving of the county town to overcome the penny-pinching opposition of the residents.⁸ Support for these various projects suggests that there would have been nothing unusual in a decision to promote, and perhaps to finance, the Gentleman's *History*. The few letters that survive clearly show that he actively solicited subscriptions, and obtained contributions from county gentry towards the cost of the engravings for the book. Further confirmation of his role in the *History* is to be found in its second volume. The engraving of Kirby Hall was noted to be

'the gift of Peter Muilman Esq. the present worthy owner: but this donation is very small comparatively to his ardent assistance in this undertaking; as through his interest many other copper-plates, as well as several interesting intelligences and anecdotes, have been obtained.'

Fitch, in his article in the 1899 *Essex Review*, commented that the reason for publishing the *History* (so soon after Morant's authoritative work) was obscure. However the original undated prospectus does make the publisher's intention clear (Fig. 3). It points out that Morant's 'elaborate history'

was 'but for one class of people' and could 'only be purchased at the amazing price of Four Pounds Fourteen Shillings and Sixpence, bound in Calf.' In contrast the new *History* would be accessible to all and 'even the Cottager himself may have the opportunity of amusing and instructing his little household.' Though, to the modern ear, this may sound condescending, it would have been considered a worthy sentiment to a contemporary and may even be the voice of Muilman himself. The *History* was to be issued in 36 fortnightly parts, costing only sixpence each, 'as an elegant

octavo, on an exceedingly good Paper, and on a new type cast by Mr CASLON'.⁹ This would have made a history of the county available to a much wider audience, at about a third of the cost of Morant's two volumes, even allowing for the fact that the *History* had grown to 59 parts before it was completed.

The Author

If Muilman only acted as promoter and facilitator, the identity of the individuals who acted as 'author' and as 'editor' remains unresolved. The first published suggestion came in 1857 in an article on coats of arms in Essex churches by the Rev John Hanson Sperling (1825-1894), an enthusiastic ecclesiologist and the restorer of Wickham Bonhunt church in Essex, of which he was rector from 1856 to 1862. In his description of Muilman's monument in Debden church, he noted that Muilman 'was, in

Two possible identifications of the 'Rev. – Stubbs' were offered by Fitch. The first, the Rev John Stubbs, who never seems to have strayed from his native Cumberland and Westmorland, can probably be excluded. The other, the Rev Richard Stubbs (c.1744-1810), was born in Cumberland and educated at Wadham College, Oxford (BA 1767, MA 1770, BD 1782, DD 1783). He was ordained deacon by the bishop of Oxford on 21st May 1769¹¹ and by 1773 was an usher at Monmouth school. Though appointed vicar of Eastwood in 1781 and rector of Fryerning in 1783, he was probably non-resident and still lived in the west of England as his three children were christened in Chester and Ilminster, Somerset between 1784 and

memorial tablet in Fryerning church only records the bare details of his life, noting that he served the parish for 29 years.¹² No published work by him has been identified and there is nothing to indicate that he had an interest in history. Furthermore he had no connections with Essex until nearly a decade after the completion of the *History*, and his non-residence in the county would have presented serious practical obstacles to acting as the author. Unless further evidence is forthcoming, it seems very unlikely that he was involved in any way.

An alternative candidate for the authorship was suggested by Fitch, based on the evidence of his own copy of the Gentleman's *History* which had formerly belonged to one of Muilman's original subscribers, William

Lawrence of Maldon. A handwritten note on the title page stated



conjunction with the Rev. – Stubbs, the writer of the Gentleman's History of Essex' but he offered no further information to support this assertion. In 1893 Fitch made an attempt to contact Sperling, by then an ordained Catholic priest living in Rome, for further information, but his letter arrived shortly after Sperling's death.¹⁰ In any case, it seems doubtful whether Sperling, after a lapse of nearly 40 years, would have been able to recall his source.

2. Kirby Hall. (ERO, I/Mb 176/1/31.)

1787. The advowson of Fryerning was owned by his Oxford college. His marriage in 1783 would have automatically terminated his college fellowship which may explain how he came to be appointed to this living. From 1791 to 1808 he was also priest in charge at Blackmore. His

'By Sir Henry Bate Dudley'. In another volume there was further evidence of Bate's involvement; a letter to Lawrence signed 'Henry Bate' which thanked him for the information that he had provided for Maldon. Fitch's library and collections were sold in December 1922¹³ and the present whereabouts of his copy of the *History*, and the letter it contained, are unknown.

The association of 'the notorious Sir Henry Bate Dudley' with the Gentleman's *History* had

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D/DPr 569

already been noted in 1880 by Edward Walford (1823–1897) writer, biographer and compiler of reference works.¹⁴ Unfortunately he provided no sources to support this claim. Walford was born at Hatfield Place, Chelmsford but was educated out of the county, and spent much of his adult life in London as a biographical journalist. He wrote a loosely topographical series on the history of London, about which a later commentator noted that ‘for light bedside reading, these books are admirable; they were obviously produced for the beginner who did not want his text cluttered with learned references’.¹⁵ Normally an assertion without references would have to be accepted cautiously, but in this instance it is backed by evidence from other sources.

Much stronger confirmation of Dudley Bates’s involvement comes from surviving letters to and from Peter Muilman, all written over a few days in 1769. On 14th May Muilman sought the assistance of the Thaxted antiquary, Rayner Heckford, in obtaining a copperplate engraving of Thaxted church for publication in the *History*. Muilman noted that ‘the writer [is] a very ingenious clergyman & the printer a very honest man.’ Later in the same letter he asked Heckford to ‘afford the author the Reverend Mr Bate Junior ye Friendship & assistance in perfecting this History with communicating such discoveries of antiquities & curiosities as are come to yr knowledge relative to the county.’ In another letter written the following day, he again referred to Mr Bate and his ‘admirable and easy style’. Further evidence of Bate Dudley’s role is found in a letter from Heckford, also dated 14th May 1769, complaining that ‘not a single number of Mr Bate’s History has fallen in my way’.¹⁶

Sir Henry Bate Dudley

These letters, in combination with Fitch’s evidence, leave little doubt that ‘the Reverend Mr Bate Junior’ was Sir Henry Bate



4. Bate Dudley. (ERO, I/Pb 4/17.)

Dudley (1745–1824), the notorious ‘Fighting Parson’ (Fig. 4). He was the second of nine children of the Rev Henry Bate of whom little is known, apart from some unflattering observations in a letter from Rev Benjamin Forster to the antiquary Richard Gough in February 1767: ‘Concerning Mr Bate of Chelmsford I will say nothing, because I can say no good. If we were together, I would tell you the plain facts upon sufficient authority. He lived near the Saracen’s Head; kept school; his wife kept a milliner’s shop; and he had the living of one of the Fambridges’.¹⁷ This was the rectory of North Fambridge on the insalubrious Dengie peninsula whose incumbents, in that period, usually lived elsewhere. His son Henry adopted the Dudley surname in the 1780s after receiving a large inheritance from an uncle, and his baronetcy came from the Prince Regent in 1812. Of his early life very little is known. He was admitted to Queen’s College, Oxford, but appears not to have graduated.

In spite of this, he was ordained priest by the bishop of London in December 1768. On the death of his father he succeeded to the North Fambridge living in 1769,¹⁸ though he is said to have preferred London life and to have spent very little time in Essex. In 1773 he came to the rescue of an actress who was being harassed by a group of young fops in Vauxhall Gardens; this led to a challenge to a duel, and ended in a boxing match in which Bate Dudley was victorious. He celebrated the event by publishing a pamphlet entitled *The Vauxhall Affray; or the Macaronies defeated*, (London, 1773). This was by no means the last time he was involved in duels or boxing matches.

Soon after this event, he became curate to the Rev James Townley, vicar of Hendon from 1772 to 1777 and author of *High Life below Stairs*, a farce which had taken London by storm in 1759. It was perhaps Townley’s example which launched Bate Dudley on a career of writing for the stage, and the first of about a dozen of

his plays and comic operas – *Henry and Emma*; a new Poetical Interlude – appeared in 1774. In the following year he was taken on as editor of the *Morning Post*, of which he became a joint proprietor in due course. His combative spirit flourished in the medium of print and he published large amounts of scurrilous material about public figures, sometimes after receipt of secret payments from the government. In 1780 he was challenged to a duel by Joseph Richardson, one of his co-proprietors. Bate Dudley ‘escaped unhurt through a foul contrivance’ and wounded his opponent. After this debacle he was dismissed and launched his own paper, the *Morning Herald*, in opposition to the *Morning Post*. This soon became London’s best selling newspaper. In 1781 he was sentenced to a year in prison for the libel of the duke of Richmond.¹⁹ The character of this combative journalist was succinctly summed up by a contemporary parliamentary journalist who wrote that he was ‘an able and witty, but profligate man...who, by his prowess as a noted bruiser and duellist, not less than by the power of his pen, was to become a very conspicuous and formidable character.’²⁰

The rest of his colourful and varied life is not relevant to establishing the identity of the author of the *Gentleman’s History*. What can be concluded from his early career is that he was a capable and prolific writer, able to work to the tight deadlines necessary in journalism, as well as being capable of the more sophisticated output required for the stage. Between his ordination in 1768 and the start of his editorship of the *Morning Post* in 1775, he would have had the time, and certainly the ability, to act as author of the *History*. It is curious that Muilman appears to have selected Bate Dudley as his ‘author’ without meeting him, as he wrote on 15th May 1769 ‘Mr Bate is such a stranger to me that, to my knowledge, I have seen him but ones (*sic*) & never

exchanged 10 words with him in all my life’.²¹ Perhaps he had been recommended to Muilman by Hassall who could have known the Bate family when they lived near the Saracen’s Head in Chelmsford. It is tempting to speculate that Bate Dudley might have cut his journalistic teeth on the *Chelmsford Chronicle* of which Hassall had been proprietor from October 1765 to the latter part of 1767,²² but there is no evidence that he did so.

There is one further piece of indirect evidence which links Muilman and Bate Dudley. In 1772, with the *Gentleman’s History* completed, Muilman, issued an ambitious printed proposal to publish a ‘New Description of England and Wales, as a continuation and illustration of Camden’. This was to be published in six parts at annual intervals and was to be financed by raising the enormous sum of 3000 guineas from subscribers. In 1775 he presented king George III with a request for his support of this venture, supposedly with the backing of the Society of Antiquaries. His plan was to use the *Morning Post* (of which Bate Dudley had just been appointed editor) to circulate requests under royal authority for information from archbishops, clergy, lord lieutenants and landed gentry.²³ In the event, the Society of Antiquaries withdrew their backing for this venture, and in the subsequent acrimony expelled Muilman from its membership to which he had been elected in 1770. This appears to have been the end of his proposal to update Camden’s *Britannia* (ultimately achieved by Richard Gough in 1789) but the venture indicates that he and Bate Dudley were intending to collaborate on another historical project.

The Editor

If Bate Dudley was the author, who was the editor? The obvious choice would have been the printer, Lionel Hassall who had offices in Chelmsford. Though the undated prospectus advertising

the launch of the *History* did not bear the name of the printer, it invited contributions to be sent to Lionel Hassall’s office in Chelmsford. The prospectus also noted that the *History* was to be set in ‘Caslon’s new type’ which is indeed the type face used throughout the book.²⁴ It seems likely that Hassall was already involved in the project, and that his experience as printer and newspaper proprietor would have made him the ideal person to edit and print the final text. Muilman had also been concerned about Hassall’s perilous financial state, and felt a moral obligation to support his business. In one of his letters Muilman, in connection with the *History*, expressed the hope that ‘other gentlemen’ would ‘lend to Messrs B & H that aid and assistance their country have an absolute right to demand off (*sic*) them’ which would seem to confirm the dual role of Bate Dudley and Hassall in the production of the *History*.²⁵ Though the latter died in 1772,²⁶ it is probable that the editorial work had already been completed.

Conclusion

It is likely that Muilman initiated, and certain that he energetically solicited information, as well as financial support, for the publication of the *Gentleman’s History*. This was but one of several examples of his backing of projects beneficial to his adopted county. His preface made it clear that he himself was not the author, and there is a good body of evidence to show that Henry Bate (later Sir Henry Bate Dudley) undertook this role, though none to show how he came to be chosen or by whom he was recommended. Bate Dudley had left Oxford University without a degree and had no reputation, other than his father’s apparently dubious one. This may explain the decision to publish the work anonymously. His later career confirms that he was a capable writer who would have been able to plagiarise Morant, to splice in a little



5. Bradwell Lodge. (ERO, I/MP 48/1/4.)

additional material from other sources, and to produce copy to a tight deadline. There is also evidence to suggest that Lionel Hassall acted as the editor of the *History*.

Sir Henry Bate Dudley was many things – clergyman, pugilist, writer of comic operas, grubstreet journalist, government agent, agricultural and social reformer, friend and patron of the artist, Thomas Gainsborough, and of the architect, John Johnson, and confidante of the Prince Regent. He also employed the Essex architect, John Johnson, to design him a house at Bradwell (Fig. 5) in his native county where, it would appear, he started his career as author of the *Gentleman's History of Essex*.

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The Author

Michael Leach is a retired general practitioner with a lifelong interest in regional and local history. He was the honorary secretary of the Essex Society for Archaeology and History for 13 years and is a member of the Essex Gardens Trust research group. He has a particular interest in the seventeenth century and the historians of Essex.

Conserving the Deeds of Colchester Hall, Takeley

by
Tony King

Back in the Autumn 2012 issue of the *Essex Journal* Katharine Schofield discussed a collection of 42 medieval deeds relating to the manor of Colchester Hall in Takeley¹ which were the subject of a conservation project at Essex Record Office where they are held. This article will take a look at the conservation treatments carried out during the project and the methods of packaging and storage that will provide these seven to eight hundred year old documents with the best possible chance of long term survival.

Seals

The deeds² consist of 42 individual parchment documents all of which appear to have had beeswax pendant seals applied to them.

**1. A seal which has undergone cleaning to the left-hand side.
(This and subsequent illustrations ERO.)**



Pendant seals hang from the lower edge of the parchment sheet attached by a tag made from a strip of parchment. The tag is passed through a fold made along the bottom edge known as a *plica* and the seal is then formed around the two free ends of the tag securing the tag in place and making it impossible to remove the seal and tag without breaking it. Although 17 documents are lacking seals³ they all show evidence of the intention to apply a seal in the form of empty tags or slits cut in the *plica* to take a tag; whether or not the seals were ever applied it is difficult to ascertain. While some tags show staining or fragments of wax clinging on to the tag, many do not which raises the possibility that seals were never actually applied to some of these documents.

When the vulnerability and the age of these beeswax seals is considered, it is remarkable that 24 of the documents still have intact seals, many with the impression clearly visible. Although beeswax seals from this period are regarded as generally chemically stable⁴ they can suffer from increased brittleness as they age and poor storage and careless handling will easily reduce a seal to a collection of fragments. While some of the seals were missing portions or existed as only a fragment still attached to the tag, the majority of those present are intact and in good condition.

All 29 seals were cleaned firstly with a brush and then using a 1% solution of a mild detergent applied with a small brush and removed with distilled water on a cotton swab. This removed an impressive amount of surface dirt that had accumulated over the centuries in the recesses of the seal and had been obscuring the finer details, (Fig. 1).

A minimal intervention approach was decided upon for repairing the three seals which were fragmenting⁵ whereby the aim was to stabilise the seal but without interfering with the integrity of it by carrying out extensive repairs which would involve restoring missing portions with new wax. A repair wax made from pure beeswax (from a local beekeeper) and a small amount of resin – which raises the melting point slightly and makes a more resilient wax was melted and applied in tiny amounts between cracks in the seal and between fragments in order to adhere them together, (Fig. 2).



2. A seal undergoing repair with a mixture of beeswax and resin.

Parchment

All the deeds are written on parchment, a processed animal skin that can be distinguished from paper by look and feel. 'Parchment' tends to refer to sheepskin whereas 'vellum' is normally used to describe the same product but made from goat or calf skin. Both of these materials are strong and very chemically stable so long as they are not exposed to extreme conditions.



3. The tissue paper backing from the goldbeater's skin being removed following the repair to a tear in the parchment.

Humidity fluctuations will cause a sheet of parchment to distort as it quickly expands due to the absorption of moisture from the air or contract as it loses water molecules due to dry air. These distortions set up areas of stress in the documents which can lead to tears and splits in the sheet. Parchment is also vulnerable to mould growth in damp conditions as well as high levels of heat and light which cause structural damage.⁶

The condition of the parchment used for the Colchester Hall deeds is good with no areas of mould damage, significant loss or major tears. Five of the deeds, however, had a small number of minor tears and splits which threatened to worsen over time⁷ and one of the parchment tags holding a seal had been torn from the document.⁸ As with the repairs to the seals, an approach of minimal intervention was used to stabilise any tears but not to treat damage that posed no threat to the future survival of the document. For instance, where a rodent had eaten away a small section of a document this damage was left as the surrounding parchment was strong but a split that had developed as a result of repeated folding was repaired.

When repairing archival documents Conservators follow an approach that attempts to select like for like materials when adding new repair material or

adhesives to an original item. This means that when repairing parchment documents, new parchment will be used to infill holes and liquid gelatine to adhere any repairs as it is an animal product in origin and is therefore thought to be compatible. By using similar materials to form repairs the Conservator is aiming to avoid any stresses that can be caused by different repair materials reacting differently to the original document. For instance, if a piece of parchment was used to repair a hole in a paper document the parchment would expand and contract to a greater degree than the surrounding paper when changes occur in humidity. The result of this would be distortions around the repair leading to stress on the document and possibly tears.

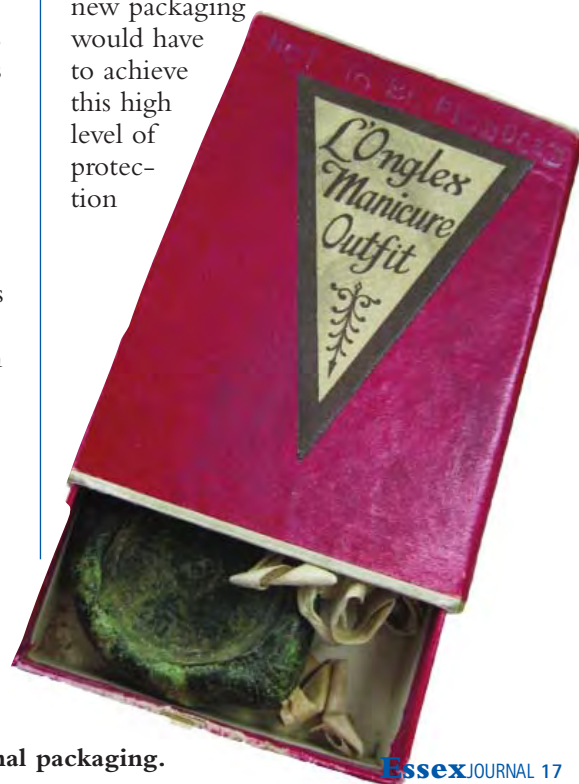
Only five of the deeds required repairs which were carried out using small pieces of goldbeater's skin. This material is made from the appendix of calves that is placed in a lime bath and stretched. The result is a very thin (0.005 – 0.01mm) but extremely strong skin which was originally used for interleaving thin sheets of gold before hammering to form gold leaf.⁹ When applied to the back of the document in shaped patches following the course of a tear or weak area, the goldbeater's skin in almost transparent and offers a good deal of support to that area of the docu-

ment. For ease of handling the goldbeater's skin is temporarily lined on to tissue which is removed once the repair is complete, (Fig. 3).

Packaging

When this collection was brought to the Conservation Studio the deeds were tightly folded and packaged into small poor quality envelopes with a few in small boxes including a box that originally housed a manicure set, (Fig. 4). This method of storage posed a number of problems. Each deed would need to be refolded and slid back into its envelope following consultation, meaning repeatedly stressing the same fold lines contributing towards weakening and splitting in these areas. The envelopes themselves were acidic in nature which could harm documents housed within them causing increased brittleness and discolouration.¹⁰ No protection was being given to the delicate seals attached to the documents and there was a real risk of crushing or impact to them when being handled.

A new form of protective packaging was required that could support the parchment document, including the weight of the tag and offer a defence for the seal from crushing or knocks. Any new packaging would have to achieve this high level of protection



4. An example of original packaging.



5. Mount board was used to protect the seals from damage.

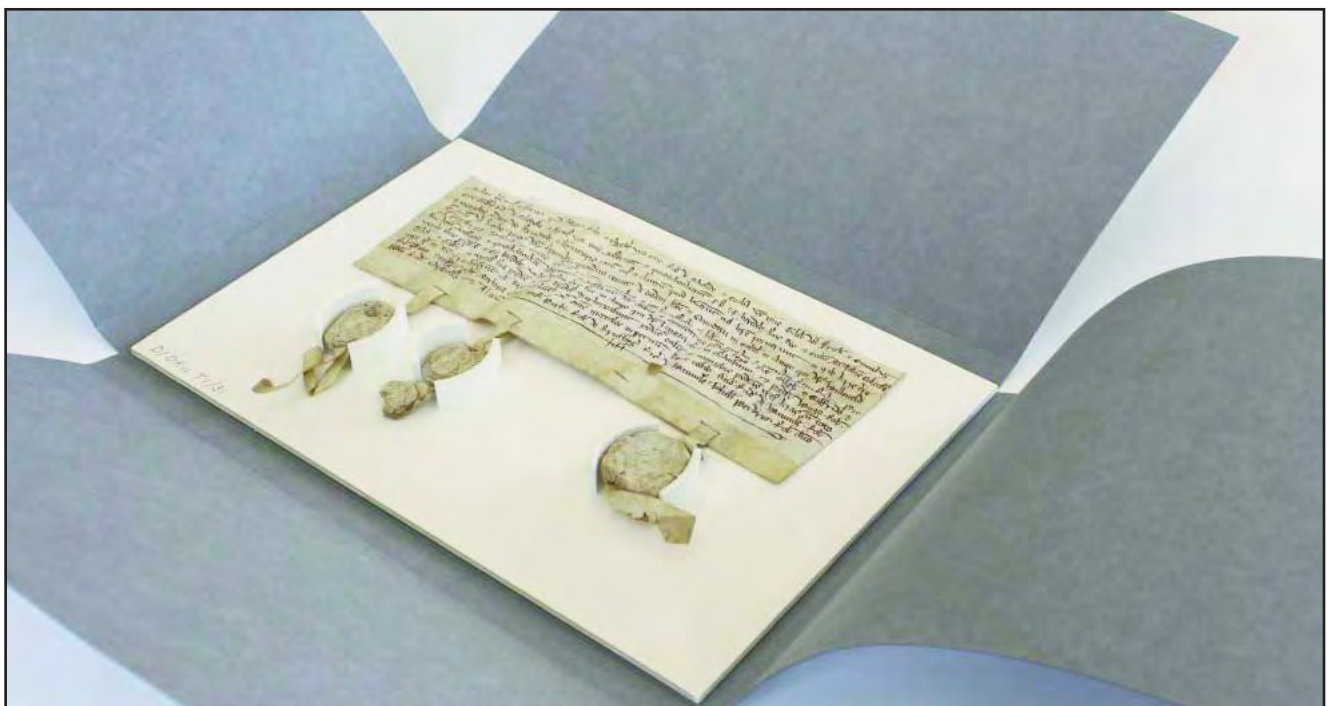
without impeding access to the document by researchers. The solution was to unfold each deed and place it on a rigid piece of archival quality mount board. Strips of polyester (a chemically inert plastic suitable for archival storage) loosely held the document in place and the ends were passed through the mount board and stuck down on the back using tabs of Japanese paper and a pure starch adhesive paste. This loose way of securing the parchment means it is able to expand and contract freely without pulling

against any form of restrictive anchoring point which would cause stress in the document and possibly damage it in the future. If the deed had any writing on the back a window was cut in the board to allow researchers to view it without having to take the document from the mount. A piece of polyester covers the gap left by the small window to provide support over the area.

In order to protect the seals two thin strips of mount board were cut and bent to follow the outline of the seal on either side

of the tag. These strips were then stuck down to the board to act as a rigid wall around the seal meaning that the brunt of any pressure from an impact would be taken by the strips rather than the seal. Finally another piece of mount board was adhered to the back in order to cover the rough edges of the polyester and neaten up the look of the board, (Fig. 5). A folder was made for each mounted deed which was deep enough to house the height of the wall protecting the seal and they were placed in standard

6. Once mounted, each document was provided with a folder made of acid free manila.





7. After the documents have been put in folders they are then stored in ERO acid free archival boxes.

archival boxes as used throughout ERO for archival storage, (Figs. 6 & 7).

Now conserved and packaged against further physical damage the final level of protection against long-term deterioration of the documents is the environmental conditions offered by storage at ERO, (Fig. 8). Here the temperature and humidity levels are carefully monitored and maintained at a level designed to provide the best possible conditions for prolonging the lifespan of archival documents such as these. Having survived for so long and having upgraded their physical storage, it would be nice to think that researchers might still be able consult them in the year 2813!

References

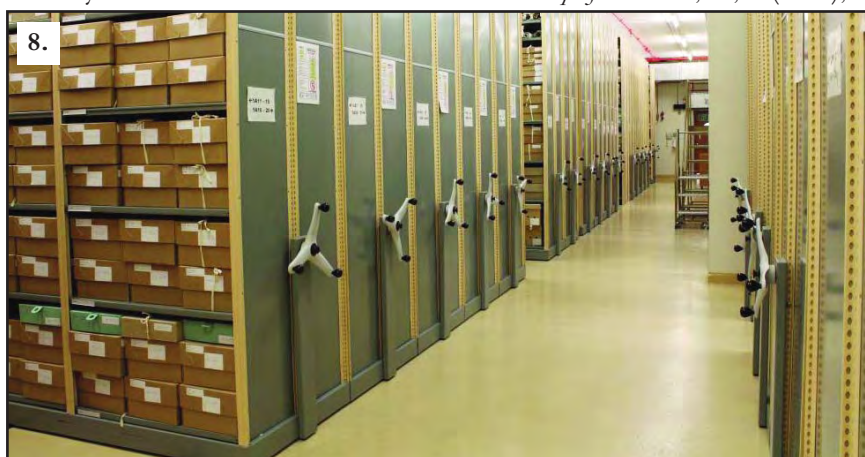
1. K. Schofield, 'The Medieval Deeds of Colchester Hall, Takeley', *Essex Journal*, 47, II (2012), pp. 54-64.
2. Essex Record Office (ERO), D/DRu T1/1-42, Deeds of manor of Colchester Hall, Takeley, c.1150-c.1250
3. ERO, D/DRu T1/6, 8, 10, 11, 15, 20-25, 27, 29, 35, 37, 41, 42.
4. It has been suggested that white or un-pigmented beeswax seals may be subject to chemical deterioration when stored in direct contact with parchment, particularly in adverse environmental conditions. Metal compounds present in pigmented seals may inhibit such damage by forming stable complexes. C. Woods, 'Preservation of Wax and Shellac Seals', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 15, II (1994), pp.203-214.
5. ERO, D/DRu T1/9, 16, 33.
6. Introduction to Archival Materials: An Introduction to Parchment, (PRO, 1996).
7. ERO, D/DRu T1/7, 8, 4, 13, 42.
8. ERO, D/DRu T1/13.
9. R. Fachs, 'The History and Biology of Parchment', *Karger Gazette*, no. 67, Skin.
10. Parchment is much more resilient to the harmful effects of acid than other archival material such as paper due to the alkaline residue of lime left in the skin after processing.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Diane Taylor, Conservator at Essex Record Office who carried out the conservation of the deeds D/DRu T1/1-42. This project was made possible by funding from a bequest left to ERO by the late Mr and Mrs Newton.

The Author

Tony King has been Senior Conservator at the Essex Record Office since 2010. After studying History at the University of Exeter, he studied for an MA in Conservation at Camberwell College of Arts. He has previously worked at Thomas Plume's Library and also as Conservator on the British Steel Archive Project at Teesside Archives for Middlesbrough University.



The Tritton Family of Great Leighs:

A Personal Appreciation

by

Alan Tritton

I feel privileged to be asked to write about my family in the *Essex Journal* – it is difficult, of course, to know where to start and where to end. However, after some general and some particular introductions, I will mainly confine myself to the Essex Trittons.

The early Trittons lived in east Kent near Ashford and there are still a number of them there. The name itself seems to have started off as Trithona and it is interesting to note that the first Saxon Archbishop of Canterbury was a Trithona who was consecrated as Archbishop in AD 653 with the Latin name of Deus-Dedit – prior to that, they had been Romans. He died 11 years later of the plague. The name seems to have changed during the years to Treeton, to Tryton and eventually ended up as Tritton.

These early Trittons seem to have been relatively prosperous – they owned some land and houses – probably they farmed in a small way and some seem to have been cordwainers so they obviously worked in leather. It seems that there was a Richard Tritton, who was Master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge in 1383 but the only knowledge I have of them is through some of their Wills. For instance, in 1481, Simon Tritton, as a good practising Catholic, draws up his Will as follows;

In nomine dei Amen, I Simon Tritton of the Parish of Throulegh being in my goode mynde seying myself in peril of deth, make my Testament in this wyse; first I bequeath my soule to Allmighty God, to our Lady Saynt Mary and

to all the company of hevyn my body to be buried in the Churche Yarde of Throulegh before sayd. Also I bequeath to the Hygh Auter (High Altar) ther for my thythes and offryngs forgotten vi.d Also I bequeath to the light of the Holy Cross ther iv.d Also I bequeath to the lights of Saynt Michell, Saynt Mary, the Holy Trinity, Saynt Thomas the Martyr, Saint Margarete in the Church to each of them iv.d Also I bequeth to the light of St.Xtopher (Christopher) ther v.d, and so on and so forth.

You will note that this Will was made in 1481 but following the Reformation and the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the Tritton Wills changed dramatically and all references to the Pope, St. Mary the Virgin, the Saints, the Company of Heaven, Synging Priests and Altars of Saints sadly disappeared.

In 1665, George Fox, the Founder of the Quaker Movement was preaching in Kent, where he said that his meetings were 'both glorious and precious'. In 1661 Robert Tritton of Ashford had come under his influence, became a Quaker and kept on being fined and imprisoned for attending what were described as illegal meetings and for absenting himself from National Worship. Samuel Pepys the Diarist writes in his Diary in August 1664 'I saw several poor creatures carried to gaol today by Constables for being at a Conventicle. They go like lambs without any resistance. I wish to God they would conform or be more wise and not to be caught.'

Lyon's Hall in Great Leighs. Extract from 1st Ed 25" OS map, sheet 34-13, 1875. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office.)



It was in 1667 that Colonel David Barclay and his son Robert the Apologist became Quakers and later on the families of the Quaker Trittons and Barclays were to be united in matrimony, which, in its turn, led to the original Quaker banking partnership of Barclay and Tritton, which, again in its turn, led to Barclays Bank, which became one of the largest Banks in the world. One could wish that Quaker morals and precepts had continued to this day, but alas not!

The Tritton Family Tree starts off with Robert Tritton who died in 1610 and continues exponentially to this day. However, let us draw your attention to Thomas Tritton, who was born in 1717 and is described as being of Kennington, Ashford and Battersea. He was sent to school in Edmonton and at the end of his school time, in 1733 he writes as follows to his Master Mr Chalkley as follows;

Much Respected Master,
After having been for some time with my Parents and friends in the country, I am returned to Master Junior Northcote upon trial and in gratitude I cannot but acknowledge thy frequent good advice and also thy care to improve me in my school studies and as an additional favour the good character thou has been pleased to give me, all of which I hope will be so perpetuated as to lay me under obligations unto thee, and likewise to demean myself so in my future conduct as to retain the like character which I doubt not will be well pleasing to my nearest friends and thee and conducing to my own advantage in a double capacity. I subscribe myself with due respects to thee
and Mistress,
Thy Obligated Scholar
T. Tritton

He was then apprenticed to a certain Mr Isaac Skinner, a wine merchant, for which his father had paid a premium of 100 guineas – a sizeable sum in the value of money at that time. The Indenture which this apprenticeship required was a long document but some sentences are more interesting than others and I set out below a selection. 'Master Tritton will faithfully serve his Master, will keep his secrets, will obey his lawful commands; he shall not waste the goods of his Master nor lend them out unlawfully; he shall not contract Matrimony; he shall not play at Cards, Dice, Tables, or any other unlawful games whereby his said Master may have any loss; he shall not haunt Taverns or Playhouses and shall not absent himself from his Master's service Day or Night unlawfully' and so on and so forth.

In 1753 when he was 35 years old, he began to think of getting married – he was now a prosperous brewer and wine merchant. Accordingly, his eyes fell on Anna Maria Brown, who was the daughter of the Quaker banker Henton Brown, who lived at the banking house in Lombard Street in the City of London and also on Clapham Common. He was not only a banker but he, also as a Quaker, wrote many books which were recorded in the Catalogue of Friends' Books such as the Divinity of Lord Jesus Christ and the principles of the Quakers as laid down in Robert Barclay's works. In due course Thomas Tritton, having purchased both the Ashford and Wandsworth Breweries, became even wealthier and had become one of the top brewers in the country. The importance of Thomas Tritton was that he was the father of John Henton Tritton, who was born in 1755 and who became the founder of Barclays Bank along with his Quaker friend Mr Barclay – Barclay comes before Tritton alphabetically hence Barclays not Trittons Bank – whose daughter he married and

I am their direct descendant. John Henton Tritton became a wealthy man – the Bank was until 1896 a partnership and the profits were considerable.

Now you will be aware that it has taken a little time to arrive in Essex but from 1783 onwards John Henton and his wife regularly used to visit Essex where they used to stay with their relations the Hanburys at Holfield Grange near Coggeshall. It was Osgood Hanbury who persuaded him to purchase in 1812 Lyons Hall, a Saxon then Tudor house, at Great Leighs, and its Estate which in those days, I believe, ran to about 300 to 400 acres. It was in 1833 that he died suddenly from a stroke in his Counting House, which was opposite the Quakers Meeting Place in Lombard Street. This Counting House – later the Head Office of Barclays Bank – was a very unhealthy place and the subject of great discontent. It had an old well, which was used as a safe, and every night the bank gold and notes were lowered into this well and drawn up in the morning and they smelt accordingly. The obituaries were numerous – a short one reads as follows 'his industry was indefatigable, his judgement remarkable, his manners at all times courteous, his self-control unparalleled'. His moral virtues were based on the soundest Christian principles and beautified by the truest Christian humility. He has left a character, which sustained throughout his entire life, has hardly a parallel.'

We continue down the generations with the wealthy Trittons continuing to serve both God and Mammon – for instance Henry Tritton, who was born in 1815 and had ten children and who lived partly in Portland Place, London, and Beddington, and who was also a partner in the Bank, provided half of the funds – £30,000 in the value of money at that time – for the construction of All Saints Church, Margaret Street near the BBC, one of the most beautiful churches in London.

What is particularly interesting is that this Church is to all intents and purposes very high Anglican, if not Anglo-Catholic, which means that Henry Tritton had moved away from Quakerism as had many of his relations but not to the same extent. When he was in London, he went every day to the 8am morning Church Service and on Sunday he went twice – in the morning to Holy Trinity Church, Marylebone and in the afternoon at 4pm to his All Saints Church. He travelled abroad a lot and every year for a month he went for his annual cure at his favourite watering hole Marienbad in Germany, which reminds one of that great cinema

film *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad*.

When he died in 1877, it was said of him that his chief characteristics were his unswerving devotion to the service of God and to his daily duty, his simple tastes, his love of family life and his strong attachment to his brother, notwithstanding their widely differing views on religion – the one Anglo-Catholic, the other my great-great-grandfather Joseph Tritton of Lombard Street, Norwood and Great Leighs, who was about as Low Church as you can get. So was his son Joseph Herbert Tritton who was very anti-Catholic. Joseph Tritton apart from banking wrote poetry and hymns, memorials and a book

for the Baptist Missionary Society of which he was Treasurer entitled *Rise and Progress of the Work on the Congo River* into which most of the Tritton family money disappeared. This book gives a certain flavour of his evangelical persuasions and his Catholic dissuasions and makes to the modern generation somewhat curious and unhappy reading.

Let us briefly divert and see what was happening in the Congo then. The King of the Congo at that time was Dom Pedro V. Initially he warmly welcomed the Baptist missionaries and gave them full liberty as he put it 'to teach and preach Jesus Christ.' But this did not last long and the reason was the Portuguese opposition. Joseph Tritton wrote that a nominal Christianity was forced upon him and his subjects and went on to say that 'the monuments of European civilisation are still recognised in the materials and ruins scattered about and in the relics of an idolatrous faith, which sought with bell, book and candle, with priestly absolution and Church Authority, backed by persecution and oppression, determined and prolonged to make of the people of the Congo a nation professedly Christian.'

He went on 'Who can tell the woes of these unhappy natives under the so-called Christian rule of the Portuguese? The sword – the cannon – the slave whip – the various instruments of torture – the strong hand of power – the reigning lust of gain – these were the influences which marked the path of the invader' and so on. However, no sooner had the news of the arrival of Joseph Tritton's Baptist missionaries in the Congo reached Lisbon than a party of Catholic priests was immediately despatched, supported and escorted by a naval and military force. Faced with a gunboat, King Pedro capitulated and turned his back on the missionaries, who either died from disease or were evicted by the Jesuits or were gobbled up by the cannibals. It was not a happy story and Joseph Tritton

The author's grandfather, Herbert Leslie Melville Tritton, 1870-1940.
(Author's collection.)



died shortly after these expensive rebuffs. He had retired to Lyons Hall, Great Leighs and it was said 'that there was something very congenial to his quiet spirit in the seclusion and in the absolute and unbroken peace and quiet at Lyons Hall.' He died in 1887 and is buried in the Tritton graveyard at St. Mary's Church.

Before he died, he employed a Scripture Reader to visit and read the Scriptures to the presumably illiterate cottagers of Great Leighs in their homes and these readings gave rise to the construction of the little unsectarian Meeting House by the side of the Boreham Road, in which he gave, as it was put, 'many highly polished addresses to the rustic congregations, who would flock to hear him.' Perhaps they flocked there as many people in the rustic congregations were his employees and if they did not turn up, their absence would be noticed. This Meeting House, subsequently described as the Tin Tabernacle, no longer exists – it was said that the Catholics had an eye on it – but the Trittons had it demolished rather than allowing the Catholics to use it as a Mass Chapel.

Joseph Herbert Tritton succeeded him. He was a powerful Banker, one of His Majesty's Lieutenants for the City of London, the Honorary Secretary of the London Clearing Bankers Association and generally a very eminent figure. He had nine children – five sons and four daughters – none of the latter married and after Lyons Hall, they lived together in Essex all their lives, which were devoted to good works, at Brent Hall, Finchingfield, a house belonging to the Ruggles-Brise family. The name of the youngest of these my great-aunts was Annette – she was an excellent artist and pianist and during the First World War she devoted herself to looking after Belgian refugees – sadly she developed arthritis in her hands and fingers and was unable to continue her musical and artistic career.

Of the five sons, the eldest was

my grandfather Herbert Leslie Melville who was born in 1870 and went into the Bank. Charles the second son, born in 1871, also went into the Bank but did not like it much and walked out the day when he received what he considered to be an unnecessary instruction from Head Office, never to return. I think he was married, although it is not recorded in the Family Tree and perhaps the reason for this was because his wife could well have been Gladys the bar maid in his Club, which he visited every day. He retired to the West Country, where he took up hunting.

The third son Arthur became a wealthy stockbroker but it appears he lost most if not all his money in the 1929 Wall Street crash and died of a heart attack shortly afterwards, leaving five children, the youngest of whom Michael won the DFC no less than three times whilst serving as a fighter pilot on aircraft carriers during the Second World War.

Claude the fourth son had a varied career which included big game hunting in East Africa and gold mining in the Yukon. During the War he was appointed a Major in the Army Service Corps and was in charge of all the troop and materiel movements at Rouen for which he was awarded the OBE. He married Evelyn Strutt of Terling and they had two sons Ronald and John. John became a Colonel in the Royal Artillery whilst Ronald became Head of the Army Film Unit during the War and kept a Diary which has now just been published.

The youngest son was Alan George Tritton after whom I am named. He became a Captain in the Coldstream Guards and fought in the South African War and the beginning of the First World War. He was killed on Boxing Day 1914 by a German sniper. He never married. When he went out to France in late 1914, he told his parents that he thought he would not return and he did not – his sisters, my great aunts, set up a shrine to him in

their house and every year at the Remembrance Day Service at St. Mary the Virgin Church at Great Leighs his name is read out as one of the Fallen. His is the only Memorial Tablet in the Church.

But we need to go back to his father Joseph Herbert Tritton of Great Leighs and London. It is probably true to say that, apart from the terrible death in action of his youngest son, there were two important events in his life, which ended in 1923. The first was the incorporation in 1896 of the Quaker partnership banking businesses in East Anglia and London – the core of which was the London banking partnership of Barclay, Bevan and Tritton in Lombard Street. There were three main reasons for this incorporation – the first was that as the businesses grew, joint and several liability as a partner became increasingly unattractive; the second was that as a partnership it was difficult to grow reserves; whilst the third was the increasing competition of the Midland Bank, which was a fully incorporated Bank with limited liability. The result for the Trittons apart, of course, from the limitation of their liabilities, was that they now drew salaries and not partnership profits, thus reducing their income.

The second significant event for Joseph Tritton was the First World War and here we need to look at the Diaries of the Reverend Andrew Clark who was the Rector of Great Leighs before, during and after the War. The diaries, which had been sitting in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, were edited by Dr James Munson, the Editor of the *Contemporary Review*, in the form of a book entitled *Echos of the Great War*. They certainly reveal, at least to me, a side of the Tritton family, of which I was not previously aware.

The fact was that there were two wars going on – firstly the World War and secondly the war between the moderate High-Churchman Andrew Clark and Joseph Herbert Tritton (JHT),

who was as low an evangelical Churchman as you can get. The result was a permanent guerilla war. JHT, for instance, constructed a Manse on his land for the Baptist Minister as close to the Rectory as he could possibly get; it was he who built the Tin Tabernacle for Baptist Services so that the Rector on his way to his Church had to pass not only the Manse but also the Tin Tabernacle and finally when he did arrive at his church, he often found JHT on summer Sunday afternoons organising evangelistic services in the front garden of Lyons Hall opposite the Church, where either JHT or specially invited preachers, as Andrew Clark wrote, 'thundered away'. Estate and house workers were expected to attend and afterwards the gardens were open to the public. It was made all the more difficult in that

the Trittons' butler Mr Redman was an Anglo-Catholic and therefore on the side of the Rector against his employer in ecclesiastical matters.

When the War broke out, the Lyons Hall Park was taken over as a military encampment with up to 1500 soldiers billeted in tents there. This was regarded by the Trittons as a great opportunity to spread the Gospel to the soldiers and my great grandmother called the Rector to say that 'she was very disappointed that they do not have evening prayers in the YMCA canteen when it closes every night at 9.30pm and that she would be quite happy to undertake this.'

When some officers and the YMCA secretary did come over for tea, she broached the subject with them and accordingly she was very satisfied when 22

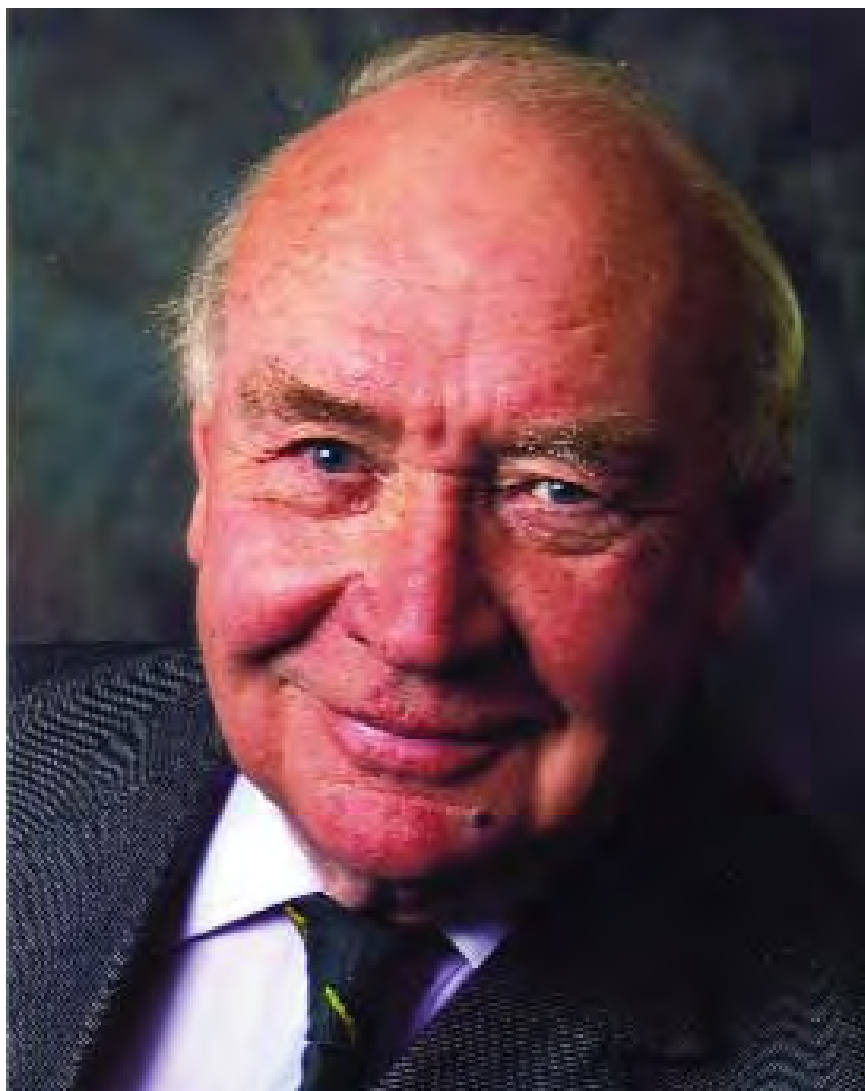
men wrote down their names for these proposed prayer meetings. However she was very disappointed when on each occasion 'these poor dear fellows' were unexpectedly called out for military duties and were therefore unable to attend.

She then erected another tent at the end of the YMCA canteen tent which she called the 'Quiet Room' to which the men could withdraw to say their prayers and where she could hold a Bible class there once a week. However, whenever she arrived there, a nice boy used to come along with a polite message to inform her that just at present, the men in camp were very much occupied with their military duties and could not come.

In 1923 JHT died and my grandfather Herbert Leslie Melville Tritton inherited the farm and estate. He was born in 1870 and in due course entered the Bank which was then still a Partnership. His wife, Gertrude Gosset, whose father was Clerk to the House of Commons, bore him two sons and two daughters. The elder son was Ralph, but always called Tim. It would be true to say that he was rather wild, could not hold down a job nor did he want to, and was eventually despatched to New Zealand – to become what was known then as a 'remittance man'. This did not work out and he returned with a beautiful bride but after only five months of marriage, he was killed in a car crash on the Great North Road – he was only 28.

My father George Henton Tritton was born in 1905 and like his forebears joined Barclays Bank and it soon became clear that he had a very promising career ahead of him. He married my mother Iris Mary Baillie from the Highlands of Scotland in 1928 and had two children – my sister Marigold and myself. In 1934, he was out hunting with the East Essex when he suddenly developed an agonising pain which turned out to be a burst appendix. It went gangrenous

The author.



and in those days without penicillin there was nothing the doctors could do and he died aged 28 like his brother. Thus my grandfather lost both his sons.

My grandfather Herbert had two daughters – the elder was Lucy, who served as a nurse during the First World War in the Military Hospital in Colchester, married a Reginald Bevan, who had been badly gassed and wounded during the Great War. They decided to become Catholics and the consequence of this was that she was disinherited by her parents and never returned to Lyons Hall. They had two lovely daughters Rosemary and Veronica – there was some very attractive Russian blood in Reginald Bevan. Rosemary became a Stewardess with British European Airways when that job was still glamorous but disaster struck when an Italian fighter plane collided with her aircraft over Naples and everybody on board was killed. Veronica married a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy in Hong Kong where his ship was stationed.

The younger daughter of Herbert was called Marjorie – always known as Aunt Dore. She married Cecil Garnett a Captain in the Rifle Brigade. He had, as they say, a 'good war' and was awarded the Military Cross when he was fighting in the Normandy Campaign in 1944 with the Canadian Commandos. After the War he was set up by my grandfather as a stockbroker but sadly died from cancer when he was aged 49 in 1949. There were no children of the marriage but because her elder sister Lucy had been disinherited for becoming a Catholic, it did mean that after my grandmother's death in 1956, she inherited the Lyons Hall Estate for her lifetime, subject to a reversion to me as the only grandson under my grandfather's Will. It was she who, when the then Rector put up an Icon to our Lady – after all, the church is dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin – walked out of the church never

to return. Unfortunately, she took a very particular dislike to me and my conversion to Catholicism in 1963; I believe my conversion to Catholicism brought about a violent stroke under the hair-dryer that same year, which rendered her speechless and immobile for the rest of her life.

Going back to grandfather Herbert, he was appointed a Director of the Bank in 1914 at the outbreak of the First World War – he was then aged 44 – and a Director of the Colonial Bank, which eventually amalgamated with the Anglo-Egyptian Bank and the National Bank of South Africa to form Barclays Bank Dominion, Colonial and Overseas, of which he became Chairman in 1934 – the year of my father's death. In 1936 when he was visiting South Africa, he suffered a heart attack in Johannesburg from which he never fully recovered. He was a keen fox-hunter with the East Essex, served for many years in the Essex Yeomanry and he was a Deputy Lieutenant for the County of Essex. He was a good, upright, conscientious man and when he retired from the Bank, the Staff presented him with a very large silver tray, on which were inscribed the following words;

Dear Mr Tritton

We send you this tray and lamp bearing our names as a token of our abiding regard and affection,

Yours Sincerely

The Members of Staff of
Barclays Bank, Dominion,
Colonial and Overseas.

His portrait painted by Eve in the year of his death 1940 shows an inexpressible sadness in his face – his two sons dead, his estrangement from his elder daughter, his eviction from his home Lyons Hall now requisitioned by the Army, his beloved stables now burnt down by the

self same Army, his ill-health and the news of the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk.

From 1940 to 1970, it could be said that there was a female interregnum – that of my grandmother and my aunt. After the Army had left, the House and Park were used as an Italian prisoner of war camp and after they had returned to Italy, the house was divided into flats, there being no one to live there or for that matter anybody who could afford to live there. This state of affairs continued until 1980, when the ugly Victoriana was pulled down and the house converted back into a comfortable family home again and is now full of life and children and grandchildren again.

When Joseph Herbert Tritton published a book about the Tritton Family, it was described as 'the dull chronicle of an Essex bourgeois family.' That may have been the case then, but it has since become a real roller-coaster and for the story of this roller-coaster, you will, perforce I fear, have to read my autobiography *The Half-Closed Door*.

The Author

Alan Tritton CBE, DL (Essex) was born in 1931 in Manchester but his family have lived in Essex for over 200 years. He fought in the Malayan Campaign and subsequently led one of the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey Stations in the Antarctic – he is currently President of the Antarctic Club. He has worked for many years in India where he established the Calcutta Tercentenary Trust which carried out the restoration and conservation of the British and European heritage paintings in the possession of the Victoria Memorial Hall, Calcutta. He was awarded the CBE for his work in India. He is currently President of the British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia. His new book shortly to be published by the Radcliffe Press, Oxford, is entitled *When the Tiger fought the Thistle - the Tragedy of Colonel William Baillie of the Madras Army*. He is married and lives and farms in Great Leighs, has three children, ten grandchildren and has been High Sheriff of Essex and Deputy Lieutenant for the County of Essex.

Archaeological Monitoring

at Prittlewell Priory, Southend, Spring 2012

by

Ken Crowe

During the Spring of 2012 the opportunity was taken to monitor a series of service trenches which were excavated in connection with the construction of a new Visitors Centre at Prittlewell Priory, Southend-on-Sea. This was one element in the complete refurbishment and re-display of the Priory funded, in major part, by a Heritage Lottery grant. An archaeological evaluation of the footprint of the Visitors Centre had been undertaken by Essex Field Archaeology Unit, with very little of archaeological interest being encountered.¹ However, the subsequent phase of development, requiring a number of service trenches to be dug between the Visitors Centre and the west front of the Priory resulted in the discovery of a previously unknown monastic-period structure, the subject of this brief note.

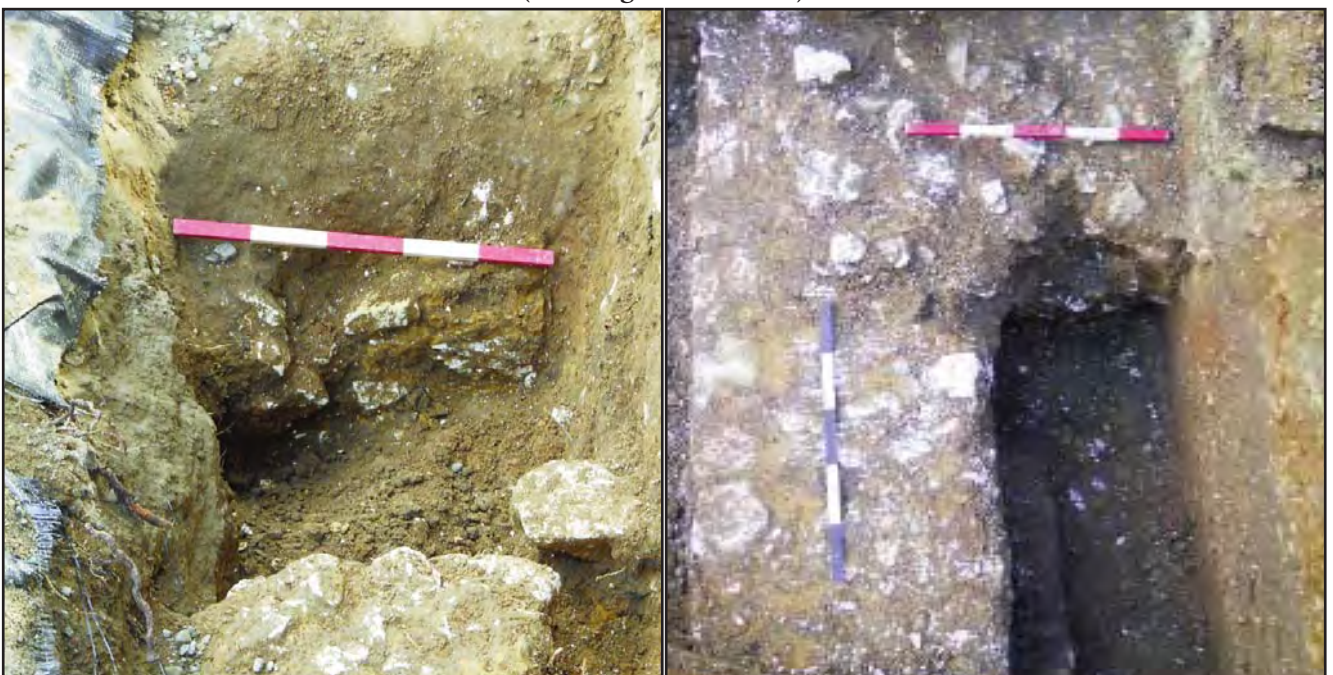
The four service trenches were dug by a small JCB fitted with a toothless bucket. In each of the trenches substantial remains were recorded of the walls of a narrow rectangular structure, which was aligned roughly east-west, projecting from the west front of the standing Priory building. The walls, constructed largely of chalk and septaria rubble survived, at the western end of the structure, to a height of over one metre, but to the east were much shallower (and in places had been completely robbed out). The walls were about 0.5m in thickness.

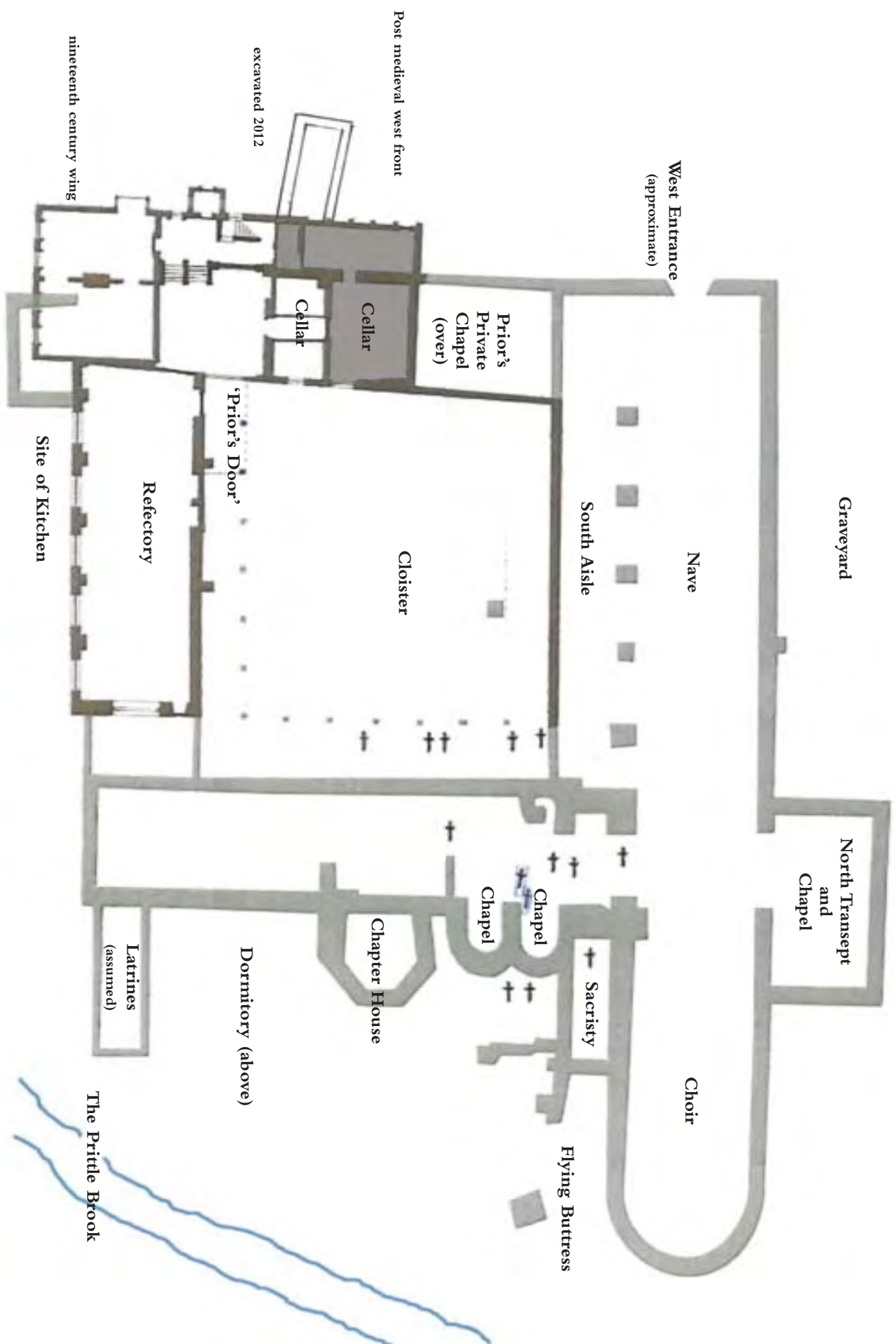
The structure enclosed an area of approximately 3.5m in width, the length (i.e. east-west) being approximately 7.5m. At the western end the walls had been constructed from a much greater depth, and formed a definitively separate enclosure of 3.5 x 2.5m. Although the base of this part of

the structure could not be reached (due to the confined space and safety considerations), it may have formed a cellar, the base of which was probably at approximately the same level as the monastic cellars in the Priory. This structure was almost completely filled with rubble, presumably from demolished buildings on the site of the Priory. It is interesting to note that the rubble comprised almost exclusively septarian nodules, chalk lumps and one piece of (broken) dressed Reigate stone. It is presumed that all stone that could have been used elsewhere for building would have been removed. It is thought that the rebuilding of Rochford Hall by Richard Rich used much of the stone from the demolished buildings from the Priory.²

Only a small area of the western front of this structure could be traced in the base of a

Left, Vertical view of the west front of the new structure, showing possible post pit. (Scale 0.5 metre) and right, Vertical view of part of the southern side of the structure, with cross wall branching to the north. (All images via author.)





Plan of Prittlewell Priory recorded from excavations.



Prittlewell Priory, c.1880. The oriel window can be seen to the left of the porch entrance

narrow trench dug for a new wall foundation. Towards the northern end of this west front there was a deliberately constructed rectangular gap. This has been interpreted as a large post pit, forming possibly one side of an entrance doorway. However, it was not possible to investigate the opposite end, and so this must remain speculation.

The walls of the western end of the structure were built in a wide, deep construction trench. A layer of crushed shell, chalk, etc on the outside of the wall presumably indicating a level at which the workmen were standing as the wall was being raised. From this level, and from the possible post pit at the western end, two unabraded fragments of Mill Green ware were recovered. This suggests that the structure may date from the early fourteenth century.³

East of this cellar-like western end, the base of the walls were built from a much higher level. Although it was not possible to trace the walls of this structure for their whole length, it is assumed that the building formed part of the original monastery, being on an alignment with (and the same width as) the southern of the two surviving cellars. Also, on the internal face of the existing post-dissolution (possibly seventeenth century) west front, timbers which possibly relate to an earlier

entrance (and dated to about 1500⁴) are also on this alignment.

A possible interpretation for this structure is that it formed a covered entranceway into the earlier west range, and possibly with accommodation above. Similar (although rather grander) structures existed at both the Cluniac priories of Thetford and Castle Acre.⁵ The timbers in the existing west front of the Priory may relate to an early sixteenth century refashioning of this entrance way (perhaps with staircase) which was later incorporated into the 'new' western façade. At a later period (probably late seventeenth or eighteenth century) an oriel window was inserted here, which was removed during the restoration of the property in c.1920. See c.1880 image.

Apart from the fragments of Mill Green ware associated with the structure, several fragments of roof tile were also recovered; these included a nibbed tile (thirteenth – fourteenth century) and several fragments of glazed tile (fourteenth – fifteenth century). The discovery of the latter group of tiles suggests that some roofs of the Priory were perhaps patterned with plain and glazed tiles.

A more detailed archive report has been filed with Southend Museums Service. Prittlewell Priory re-opened in June 2012,

exactly 90 years after it opened to the public as the town's first museum. But now the opportunity has been taken to interpret the history of the Priory, from monastery to private house, in new displays. The oldest surviving parts of the Priory – the cellars, the Refectory and Prior's Chamber – are used to tell the story of the monks' daily lives, the work of the Prior and the Priory's endowments, and the Dissolution. The 'new' wing, built for Daniel Robert Scratton in the mid-nineteenth century, tell the story of the Priory as a private house, concentrating on the lives of the Scratton families who owned, and later lived in the Priory from the later seventeenth century to the early twentieth century.

References

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3. I am grateful to Lyn Blackmore of the Museum of London for identifying the ceramics.
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5. I am grateful to both Debbie Priddy and Glyn Coppack for this suggestion.

The Author

Ken Crowe qualified as a teacher in the early 1970s, and taught history at a local Comprehensive for six years. Having taken an extra-mural Diploma in Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology (UCL), he joined the staff of Southend Museums Service. Over the next few years he completed an MA in Local and Regional History (Essex) and then an MA in Archaeology (Birkbeck). He is now Curator of Human History at Southend Museum, with a special interest in the early archaeology of south east Essex and in local history. The highlight of his career – being present at the excavation of the 'Prittlewell Prince.'

‘Captain’ James Bushell

of Little Holland and Frinton; some initial research

by

Roger Kennell

‘Not far from the church is a pretty little house, either this or another residence on the spot, belonged to the famous Captain Bushel.’¹

The church mentioned in this quote is Frinton on the Essex coast but who was Captain Bushell, and why was he famous? His story is incomplete, but we have several unconnected snippets of contemporary and printed information about this character, who was an early undersea diver and salvager, and also became involved in smuggling. The following is an attempt to piece together what information has been found to date.

James Bushell was born in 1672, and was believed to be of the small coastal village of Little Holland. He found fame devising a leather diving suit which enabled him to begin to carry out salvage works along a coastline notorious for groundings, and wrecks caused by the numerous sandbanks, the Gunfleet Sands being one, and much feared by mariners. The suit had a long tube extending from his head. Whilst underwater, an assistant in a small boat would pump air down this

tube thus enabling Bushell to carry out his work. From this technique Bushell became known as a 'Fisher of Wrecks' and it must be assumed began to acquire some wealth from this work.

The Tendring Hundred coastline was isolated in the earlier centuries, and both Little Holland and Frinton had very small populations. Smuggling was prevalent at this time and Bushell with his intimate knowledge of the seas and the coast hereabouts became involved in these activities, but was caught in 1729 as recorded in a Treasury Customs and Excise document, where an abstract of his examination for smuggling is held at The National Archives.

At Frinton the manor, via Sir Harbottle Grimston, was sold to Thomas Warren, a mariner of Wapping. Thomas married Elizabeth, a daughter of John Culmer of Deal in Kent. They had three children, Thomas, Martha, and Joane. James Bushell, said to be 5' 11" in height, and 6' round the belly, still living at Little Holland met Joane Warren and at an unknown date married and set up home at Frinton. They were to have a son named Jeremy. In 1691, Joane's father, Thomas Warren, passed his lands at Frinton to his son in law James Bushell, and who himself later willed it to his son Jeremy. Bushell also owned Joy's Farm at Little Clacton. Bushell had a tenant living and working the land for him as he was at this time living at Frinton.

James Bushell, together with Thomas Warren, appears again, in

Extract from Robert Morden's 1695 county map of Essex of the Tendring Hundred showing Little Holland, Frinton and the Gunfleet Sands. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office, Searchroom County Map Drawer 2, Map 2 (A).)





Bennetts farmhouse, once Bushells, in York Road, Holland-on-Sea in 1932. (Author's collection.)

the will of Elisha Wenlock of Little Holland. Elisha states in the will that; 'And lastly I constitute ordain and appoynt my beloved friend James Bushell, Mariner sole executor of this my last will and testament.'¹²

It was whilst living at Frinton, and continuing his diving activities that Bushell was contacted by the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (the VOC), who once plied the seas between Europe and East Asia. One of their vessels was the *Vliegent Hart*, built in 1729. On only her second voyage she struck a sandbank and was sunk. Bushell asked for a chart to be prepared for him to help find the wreck, although he was not to actually dive on the site, but it proves the recognition of his expertise.

A further indication of Bushell's expertise may be shown by his sobriquet of 'Captain.' It is believed that it is no indication of any Naval Rank, but a term of affection given to him by his colleagues who recognised his seafaring abilities, and his commanding character.

James Bushell lived through an era of considerable change to his local landscape and seascape. Sometime during the seventeenth century the Gunfleet Haven, a trading estuary of the Holland River located between the parishes of Little Holland, Great Holland and Frinton along the

coastline, began to silt up. Commissioners appointed decided to build a seawall across the estuary and reclaim it from the sea to eventually provide pasture land. A sluice was constructed to allow the rainwater draining into the river to escape into the sea at low tide. James Bushell would have lived through the latter years of this major reclamation work, and the activity may well have made his smuggling work more difficult.

The silting up and eventual loss of this trading estuary would have created a changed economy to the area with its effects being significant. Little Holland and Frinton were to become isolated communities on the coast with little passing road trading opportunities. The very small populations of both Little Holland and Frinton recorded throughout the nineteenth century may be the long lasting results of this changed economy.

James Bushell's hazardous diving exploits eventually cost him his life. In the year 1738, when aged 66, and following a hearty meal, he went out to the Middle Swin Channel off Great Clacton to dive on a wreck. Whilst at work undersea, he became overwhelmed by a tidal wave and succumbed to its force. His body was recovered, and he was buried just outside the porch of Frinton Parish Church.

Richard Stone of Frinton, records in his Common Place Book³ his death stating that 'Captain James Bushell was drowned in the Great Tide. Joanna Bushell, his widow, continued to live in the area and eventually died in the year 1776, as recorded in the Great Clacton Parish Registers.

Addendum

During 1933, a farmhouse located in York Road, Holland on Sea, the former Little Holland, and known as Bennetts Farm was demolished. Said to have been built in 1738 at the time, this property was recorded as Bushells Farm, in Whites 1847 *Essex Directory* of Little Holland. James Bushell died in 1738, thus he may well have lived, or owned this farm, or a previous house on the site, and the name was perpetuated until becoming Bennetts Farm. It is known that when the farmhouse was demolished, all the documents relating to the farm, and said to have filled a wheelbarrow, were destroyed! This surely would have been our proof of the famous 'Captain' James Bushell, diver, land owner, and smuggler, once of Little Holland.

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Acknowledgements

The author wishes to record his thanks to the late Kenneth Walker for his willingness to share his researches during many meetings in his latter years.

The Author

Roger Kennell is the Holland on Sea History Recorder, and Chairman of the Clacton VCH Group. Born at Holland on Sea, he now lives at Hadleigh, Suffolk.

John Herbert Boyes (1914-2013)

John Boyes was born at Guildford, Surrey in November 1914 and died on 6th May 2013, aged 98 years. He married Helen Leila Marjorie Tuck (known as Marjorie) in 1941 at Upper Agbrigg, Yorkshire. Her sister, Monica, was later well known as the Headmistress of the former East Anglian School for Girls at Bury St. Edmunds. John and Marjorie had three sons including Geoffrey who lived with his parents and looked after them in their later years. Marjorie, who died in November 2002 at the age of 89, often accompanied John to meetings and on his visits to places of historic and industrial interest.

John was a Civil Servant, a senior Factory Inspector and served in the Royal Army Medical Corps during the Second World War. His father had served in the First World War and one of John's earliest recollections was of his father returning home at the end of the war and taking him out for a most happy and memorable day to a canal somewhere in Surrey, which marked John's lifelong interest in canals and industrial archaeology. His later work as a Factory Inspector greatly increased his interest in industrial archaeology.

John and family moved to Chingford in 1956 and he soon became a member of Chingford Historical Society serving as Chairman from 1970 to 1978 and President from 1989 to 2010. He was also President of the Greater London Industrial Archaeological Society, President of the Lee and Stort Rivers Committee and Patron of Thurrock Local History Society.

He was a founder member of the Essex Archaeological and Historical Congress when it was inaugurated in 1964 and was President from 1980 to 1984 and thereafter an active Past President, who regularly attended meetings until quite recently. For some years he had been the last surviving founder member and frequently made valuable contributions at meetings and raised members attention to matters of mutual interest and in particular in the field of industrial archaeology. In millennium year, 2000, he wrote *A Footprint in Time* being an appreciation and history of Congress from 1964 to 2000.

Among his other publications were *The Canals of Eastern England* written jointly with Ronald Russell and published in 1977. This is a history of waterways in the eastern region between the Lee and the Humber. The publication of this book completed the 15 volumes (in 13 titles) about British Canals. Two years later he became the first holder of the Rolt Memorial Fellowship from Bath University in recognition of his services to industrial archaeology. John was also a Freeman of the City of London.

John was a prolific writer and among his many publications was *North Chingford Methodist Church 1905-1985*, a brief history of 80 years service, which he revised in 2008. He was appointed a Methodist Lay Preacher in 1954 and became a pillar of the

church. It was here that his well attended funeral was held on 29th May 2013.

He was a member of many organisations including the National Trust, the Railway and Canal Historical Society, The Newcomen Society, the Wind and Watermill Section Committee of SPAB, and the Inland Waterways Association.

In fact, for many years, he was a lecturer for the National Trust and the Inland Waterways Association. He also gave lectures and talks to numerous organisations often with a particular emphasis on railways, canals and inland waterways. In Essex he had been a member of the Essex Society for Archaeology and History since 1980 and was also a member of the (Waltham Abbey) Gunpowder Mills Study Group. A particular interest in the history of the maze at Saffron Walden led him to write an article on this subject for *Essex Journal* in autumn 1973.

John was bulletin editor for the Newcomen Society for the study of the History of Engineering and Technology to which he contributed many articles. He was also a contributor to *Essex Journal*, The Friends of Epping Forest newsletter, The East London History Society newsletter, the Railway and Canal Historical Society Journal and many other publications. He wrote book reviews for *Essex Countryside* for many years and was particularly disappointed when it changed ownership and his services were no longer required by the new proprietors.

An eminent historian and an expert on local history, he was recognised as an Associate Member of the Royal Historical Society and in 1999 with election as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. John was a well respected and long-serving member of the Victoria County History of Essex Editorial Committee. He was also a contributor of essays to *An Essex Tribute* presented to Dr. Fred Emmison in 1987 and to *Essex: 'full of profitable things'* presented to Sir John Ruggles-Brise in 1996.

It was perhaps industrial archaeology, which was his greatest passion and where his writing and editorial skills were the most prolific. He was a most generous man and was always happy to share his immense knowledge gained over a long and worthy life.

Adrian Corder-Birch
(With contributions from Martin Stuchfield and David Young)



Rob Brooks (1945–2013)

Rob was born in 1945 in Hampshire where he had a happy childhood in Hamble enjoying the freedom along Southampton Water and Netley that one could have in the 1950s. He attended the local primary school and then on to Grammar school at Barton Peverel where his academic prowess shone. His natural charm, common sense and good communication skills even as a teenager made him a natural leader and he was made head boy. He represented Hampshire at hockey and had a natural talent for all ball games. His support for Hampshire never wavered and he followed the cricket team and of course Southampton FC. He had an encyclopaedic memory for Sports events and personalities and lived the Olympics last summer. He played 5 a side football, golf with a handicap of 6, squash and latterly croquet all of which he thoroughly enjoyed.

He gained a place at Cambridge to read Mathematics but chose instead to go to Queen Mary College, London where he held a Drapers Scholarship. Rob participated in all the undergraduate pastimes particularly chess and bridge. His easy and friendly nature made him senior resident and it was at his initiation ceremony that he first met Anne. The chemistry between a mathematician and an innumerate geographer equated and Rob and Anne were married in 1967. Rob continued with his doctorate at QMC and he dedicated his thesis to Anne. However the application of Boltzmann integro differential transport equation left her cold.

They settled in Chelmsford and Rob applied to work at Marconi Research Centre where he later became manager of the Remote Sensing Division. He led a team of high-powered mathematicians, physicists and engineers. The research was concerned with designing tools necessary to interpret data received from aircraft and satellites. The fusing of all the information produces appropriate maps of the ground and they can be used for monitoring the weather, crop growth, deforestation and man-made structures and vehicles. Rob travelled worldwide contributing to NATO conferences. He led his team with skill and enthusiasm: he had a sympathetic attitude to his staff combined with a good technical appraisal of the subject in hand which was returned by loyalty and respect. As Marconi declined Rob worked for the European Space Agency and BAE systems. Rob was a Fellow of the Institute of Mathematics and on their Committee.

Rob took early retirement with enthusiasm. He now had time to develop his other interests. He was passionate about local history and the environment. He studied for an Advanced Diploma in Local History at Oxford University and this encouraged him to join the Friends of Historic Essex, whose newsletter he



edited, as well as the Essex Society for Archaeology and History, where until his untimely death, he served on its Council. In 1999 he established the High Country History Group. Rob chaired the Ongar Wildlife Society and inspired people to care about the environment. He combined his love of trees and history to lecture for the WEA on the Royal Forests of Essex. He became a tree warden and helped to compile the Ongar Tree Strategy. Rob also somehow managed to fit in training and working for the CAB which he found challenging and rewarding. In January 2003 he suffered cardiogenic shock, which involved a lengthy stay in intensive care. Although he continued with many of his activities adding Bridge and Bookworms, he never felt he made the same contribution.

Rob was a proud father to Suzanna and Paul and Suzanna's marriage to Jens was a memorable day and the arrival of three beautiful granddaughters Emily, Hannah and Lara put the icing on the cake. Rob was always good company, friendly, easy to talk to, concerned and thoughtful of others. He wore his learning lightly and had the ability to pass on his knowledge at many different levels in a calm and unhurried way. However, Rob had a mischievous sense of humour. He inherited his quiet manner and thoughtful speech from his Father and his competitive spirit from his Mother. Rob was a real gentleman.

He found his last illness difficult to comprehend and was frustrated that his brain didn't function as quickly as he expected. Rob passed away quietly at home, and the church at St Margaret's Stanford Rivers was packed to overflowing with his family and friends for his funeral.

Martyn Lockwood

Book Reviews

Christopher Foyle,
Beeleigh Abbey – a guide and history,
pp.97. ISBN 978-0-95488-962-3,
Christopher Foyle Publishing Ltd, 2012,
£14.75.

I must declare an interest in this book, as I was one of a fortunate group of diggers excavating a site adjacent to the Abbey between 2001 and 2006, (of which more below). The excavation was instigated by Christopher Foyle, who had acquired the Abbey in 2000 from the estate of his aunt Christina Foyle. She in turn had inherited it from her father William Foyle, founder of the bookshop, who had bought it in 1943. The young Christopher had spent many happy holidays there, and on taking over the property he threw himself into restoring and improving the somewhat dilapidated Abbey and gardens. At the same time he took a keen and active interest in the excavations in the adjoining field, making frequent visits to review progress.

Christina Foyle, while a prominent public figure well known for her bookshop and literary lunches, kept a low profile at Beeleigh, maintaining the Abbey as essentially a private place. Its site, off a side road out of Maldon, down by the river Chelmer, is probably unknown to many. Mr Foyle's book opens it up to view, conveying his fascination with its past history together with his ambition to improve and preserve it for future generations.

It is a pity that at present the Abbey is not open to visitors (the Foyles are not in residence) so the guide is currently something of a virtual one. Hopefully the doors will reopen one day, but meanwhile the gardens, now replanned and replanted, can be visited on regular Open Days.

The book is something of a compilation, and Mr Foyle acknowledges contributions from a number of local historians including, among others, David Andrews, Howard Brooks, Paul Drury, Stephen Nunn, Pat Ryan, and Chris Thornton. The format means that successive chapters do not always 'flow', but each section has much of interest.

The first part covers the monastic and secular history of the Abbey. We learn that the sonorous name of its founders, the Premonstratensian Order, derives from Prémontré in northern France, where their first house was built, and that a small branch of the Order has been established in Chelmsford since 2009.

There follow articles that will appeal variously to archaeologists, historians and general readers. The archaeological section, drawn from *Underground at Beeleigh* (published by Maldon Archaeological and History Group) describes the recent excavations adjacent to the Abbey and sheds light on what appears to have been its service area. The dig revealed the foundations of a medieval hall house, possibly a guest house, and various outbuildings including a

smithy and kitchen. A rare discovery was a brick-clamp which may have produced about 100,000 Tudor bricks. (Note that the site has now been back-filled so these features are no longer on view).

The history of the main Abbey buildings includes articles ranging from an account of the estate and its income to events at the Dissolution, and from the poisoning of an Abbot to tales of buried treasure and secret tunnels. The intriguing story of St Roger of Beeleigh, a thirteenth century saint never fully canonised, culminates after his death with the return of his heart from London as a relic. This links with one of the most exciting finds from the archaeological dig, a fragment of a stone carving showing two hands cupping a heart-shaped object, so possibly part of an effigy of hands holding the casket containing St Roger's heart.

The second half of the book is a guide to the abbey as it stands today, only a small part of the original, as many of the buildings were destroyed at the dissolution of the monastery in 1547. The church to the north of the existing buildings has completely disappeared, the site lying under the pond and part of the gardens.

However in the remaining complex, and following sensitive restoration by Mr Foyle, there is much of interest. The book gives a detailed if rather technical account of the construction of the various spaces and their uses. They are home to many treasures preserved or collected over the centuries, including fifteenth century stained glass panels in the former Calefactory, Jacobean tester beds, and many paintings. Perhaps the jewel in the crown is the magnificent library with its sixteenth century oak roof beams, now restored to its former glory in the old dormer, together with its display of medieval manuscripts and antiquarian books from the collection of William Foyle.

The last section of the book will appeal to gardeners, with a description of the restoration, extension and replanting of the grounds which have been carried out since 2000. On Open Days visitors are invited to follow a trail from the more formal gardens near the house to the wild flower meadow, round the pond under which lies the old church, and as far as the river. This also gives an opportunity to see the garden frontage of the Abbey itself.

The book contains several useful plans and is lavishly illustrated, including attractive thumbnails running across the top of the pages of the first part. A minor caveat is that the Foyle family tree has been squeezed on to one page, and is rather difficult to follow. That aside, the Abbey, a fascinating microcosm of ecclesiastical and secular history, is well served by Mr Foyle's book, which should appeal to a wide audience.



Jenepher Hawkins

Alan Maddock,
**Through Two Reigns: Howe Street in
Great Waltham 1910-1936,**
pp.156. ISBN 978-0-9547644-2-5
Published the author, 2012, £10.00.

Available from the author: Woodman's Cottage, Howe Street,
Great Waltham, CM3 1BA.

This book is a history of Howe Street, a hamlet in the parish of Great Waltham, north of Chelmsford, from 1910 to 1936. It is the third in a trilogy which covers the history of Howe Street from 1837 to 1936. The previous volumes cover the periods 1837-1900 and 1901-1909 respectively, and this one completes the story.

The author has carefully researched the census, parish and electoral registers, Inland Revenue returns, the *Essex County Chronicle* and a multiplicity of archives at the Essex Record Office to produce an extremely detailed account of the hamlet and its people. Although further work might be done on particular families, it is unlikely that any future general historical work on Howe Street will surpass Alan Maddock's survey of life in the century he has covered.

The contents will be of interest to anyone with ancestors, relatives or friends who lived in Howe Street in the early twentieth century or in preceding years. They are also an eye-opener for anyone who wishes to learn about life in rural Essex – or, for that matter, rural England – before the Second World War. So much of what the author describes was typical of life in the countryside before the far reaching changes of the second half of the twentieth century.

At the commencement of the period covered by this book, most of the male population worked on the land for meagre returns and lived with their families in substandard houses. They lacked running water, flush toilets, bathrooms, consumer durables and electricity. The absence of modern drains left them with the problem of disposing of sewage which polluted the land and the water courses. Many families lost children in infancy and life

expectancy was considerably less than that which we enjoy today.

The predominant influences in the community were those of the squire and the clergy. Col. William Neville Tufnell, who owned 4,000 acres of the land, and two of his sons, chaired Great Waltham Parish Council from 1894 to 1936. Three of the vicars served in turn on the Council and the rest of the places were normally taken by local businessmen. There were no contested elections before 1934 and political life was totally dominated by the Conservative Party. The author says of Great Waltham Parish Council that there was little sign of developing democracy and it was really an oligarchy (p.77).

However, fundamental changes began in the period 1910-1936. The proportion of men employed in agriculture declined quite sharply. In 1911 two-thirds of men worked on the land or in building operations. By 1936 there were two mechanics, a steel grinder, four machinists, two lathe operators, a ware-housman, a plumber, a civil servant and five motor or tractor drivers in Howe Street. Electricity and the telephone had reached the hamlet. The development of road and rail transport and the establishment of modern factories in Chelmsford had begun to change the mode of life in Howe Street and over the surrounding countryside, as well as in the towns.

The book provides a fascinating record of life in Howe Street and includes a chapter by Ian Gowers on his great grandfather, George Thomas Gowers (b. 1881), who was employed as a building worker but won the Military Medal during his military service in the First World War.

Recorded history should deal with the lives of ordinary people, as well as the high and mighty, which is what this book does. It describes the real lives of the members of a rural Essex community in the earlier part of the twentieth century, and deserves to be read both by those with Howe Street connections and those intent on studying bygone life in the English countryside. I recommend it as a positive contribution to the history of our county and hope it will be widely read.

Stan Newens

Richard Morris,
**Forest for the People: George Burney
(1818-1885) and his fight to save
Epping Forest,**
pp.viii & 36. ISBN 978-1-90526-916-7,
Loughton and District Historical Society,
2012, £3-20.

This is another publication by the admirable Loughton and District Historical Society (from which it is available) and is written by Richard Morris who, as a Verderer, has an abiding interest in all aspects of the Forest and its history. One of the

heroes in the fight to save the Forest for public use was George Burney. Though a self made and successful manufacturer of water tanks, like many Victorians he took his responsibilities to society seriously – in particular to those members less advantaged than himself. His delight in the Forest dated from childhood when it was an easy walk from the family home in Bow and he was accustomed, in his own words, 'to recreate myself in the blackberry orchards'.

His concern about the loss of public right of access to the Forest was aroused in 1864. The Metropolitan Board of Works (MBW) had been approached by the government which was seeking a buyer for those forestal rights of the Crown not

Book Reviews

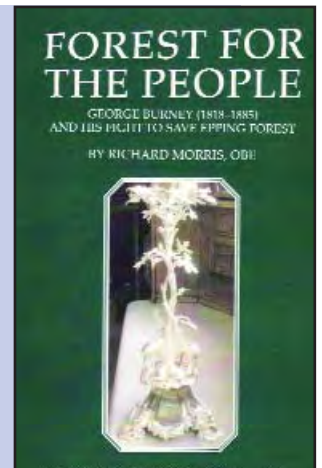
already sold to lords of the manor. He wrote to the MBW asking them to receive a deputation 'of influential persons...to urge your acceptance of this trust'. Nothing came of this, but the piecemeal disposal of Forest land by lords of the manor continued apace. The Commons Preservation Society, established in 1865, soon became involved and, in February 1866, formed a separate East London committee to fight the enclosure of the Forest, George Burney being elected as one of its members. This committee met weekly, organised public meetings, published circulars and canvassed for financial support. Burney proposed that a legal challenge could be mounted if 100 people put up £100 each, to which he himself would be a willing contributor. At a public meeting in April 1867 he hinted at the possibility of direct action as well, stating that it was 'not only the rich that had rights – the poor had rights also, and if the rich put up fences where they had no right to do so, the poor would be justified in pulling them down again.'

Pressure on the government was effective and, in 1869, it declared in principle its intention that the Forest should remain an open space, and that action should be taken against illegal enclosures. However progress in achieving this was slow: in 1874, after three years' deliberation, the Master of the Rolls ruled that certain lands had been enclosed illegally and that the fences should be removed to

allow commoners free access to those parts of the Forest, pending a report by the Epping Forest Commissioners. Four years later the fences were still in place, and George Burney made his move. Four omnibuses, each containing 25 workmen, armed with the appropriate tools, demolished several miles of illegal fences at Wanstead, Buckhurst Hill and Loughton.

Legal action followed and injunctions were obtained by landowners to restrain Burney from further action. All this obtained useful publicity in the press (which was largely sympathetic) and did not prevent his continued campaign through committee and pamphlet. This, and much more about Burney's life, is detailed in Richard Morris's excellent and carefully researched booklet. There is an appendix listing the large number sources used in its compilation, and some well chosen illustrations, including the highly elaborate silver épergne presented to Burney in 1880 in recognition of his work in saving the Forest for the public.

Michael Leach



Beryl Claydon, **In And Around Heybridge In The Nineteenth & Twentieth Centuries** pp. 288. ISBN 978-0-95724-100-8, 2012, £15.00.

Available from the author: 57 Crescent Road, Heybridge, Maldon, CM9 4SJ. Cheques payable to 'B. Claydon'.

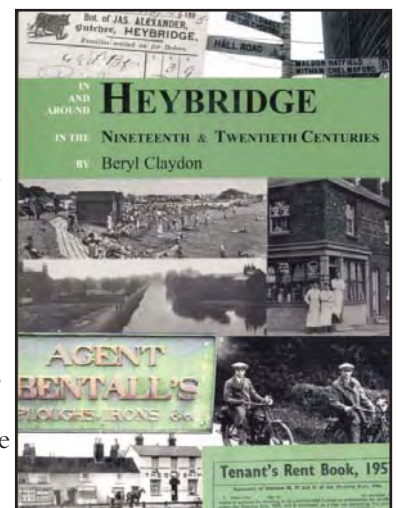
From the general overview of the development of Heybridge, to the individual places and landmarks familiar to the area, this book is arranged in a way that invites the reader to dip into the book, rather than just reading it from start to finish. Covering such places as The Square, The Street, Bentalls' and the Bentall family, shipping along the Blackwater estuary, Goldhanger Road, and Heybridge Basin, as well as the arrival, in Heybridge, of mains water, sewerage, and gas lighting. There is also a piece about the bombing of Heybridge Basin on 11th January 1943.

This book makes up for the lack of publications about this, often overlooked, area, which all too often gets lumped in with Maldon, in other reference works. Included are some interesting photographs, including one showing the first Bentalls' workers cottage, built in 1815. There is also the addition of a map showing Heybridge in 2012, and, on the other side, the general layout of the works of E.H. Bentall & Co Ltd during the Second World War.

As a general overview, a list of Heybridge people from the 1848 Heybridge & Maldon Trade Directory is also included. The list of Heybridge Traders show just how many trades and professions have declined over the years. The origins of Doe's, at Ulting, is also covered, the company still being a prominent business to this day. No book on the area would be complete without reference to the great flood of 1953, which made national news, as well as details of earlier floods in the area. Also included are interesting pieces about the WW1 secret sea plane base at Osea Island, called, unsurprisingly, HMS Osea.

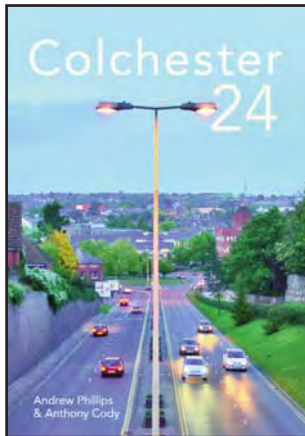
One slight gripe is the mention of Copsey's fish & chip shop on page 128. The implication in the text suggests that the fish & chip shop has gone, whereas, in fact, the fish and chip shop, still trading under the Copsey name, is still there. The restaurant part, added later, is now the Turkish Barber shop. Aside from that, a worthwhile addition to the bookshelf.

Derek Watson



Book Reviews

Andrew Phillips & Anthony Cody,
Colchester 24,
 pp.96. ISBN 978-1-4456-1056-6,
 Amberley Publishing, 2012, £14.99.



Colchester 24 is the result of a project which invited members of the public to photograph the life of the town over a period of twenty-four hours in the autumn of 2011. Over five thousand photographs were produced and the book is a selection of the images which reflect, as the blurb says, 'the changing world of modern Colchester'. The project followed on from a similar event which took place in 1986.

Since the pictures have been taken by amateur photographers, they vary in their 'artistic' quality – some have clearly been framed and composed with great care, others simply 'snapped' in the midst of the hubbub. The book is not a glossy, coffee-table confection using the ingenuity of the graphic designer and Photoshop sleight-of-hand to present an impossibly positive view of the town. Instead it is designed simply with two photographs on each page showing, on the whole, commonplace scenes of 'ordinary' people going about their lives both at work and at play, as well as roads, railways, open spaces and buildings both shiny and grubby. The

overall impression is of a very 'real' depiction of the town which is shown 'warts-and-all'. A view of the River Colne passing Lower Castle Park which brings to mind Monet's *The Water-Lily Pond*, or perhaps more likely a Constable landscape, is followed on the next page by the sorry sight of the Grosvenor Hotel boarded-up and neglected.

The photographs on each page are accompanied by a single paragraph of notes giving very brief details of the scenes depicted, as well as the names (where they are known) of people in the photographs and credits to the photographers. Only rarely do the editors allow themselves an editorial comment. More of such comments may have made the book a more stimulating read but would probably have diminished its value as a largely objective record of the everyday life of the town as well as, no doubt, reducing the number of images which could be included.

The book will be of interest to all who know Colchester, but its value lies in its accurate depiction of continuity and change in the town. For example, a photograph of a group of 'punks' which formed part of the 1986 exhibition is included (p.4). This can be compared to a picture from 2011 of some young people relaxing in Culver Square (p.56). The buildings around them may have changed in architectural style and usage but both images show youth wearing Dr Marten's boots. Indeed the true value of this book will not be revealed until around 2035, if and when the project is repeated. Watch this space!

Martin Astell

Norman Jacobs,
Clacton-on-Sea Then and Now in Colour,
 pp.96. ISBN 978-0-75247-112-9,
 The History Press, 2012, £12.99.

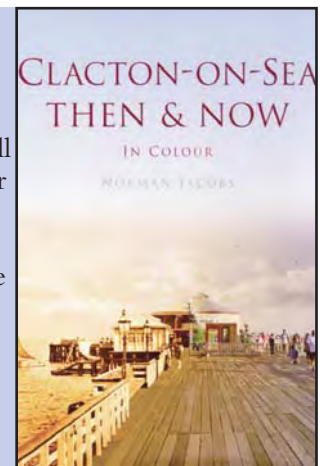
Clacton-on-Sea is fortunate to have a keen local historian in Norman Jacobs who has recorded much of its history during the last three decades. His latest book is of old sepia photographs of Clacton, which are juxtaposed with their modern views in colour. This format is becoming increasingly popular throughout the country and immediately enables the reader to identify exactly where the earlier photographs were taken. This is particularly helpful to identify where landmarks have disappeared and locations, which have changed considerably over the years.

The illustrations are accompanied by informative text, not the short captions to be seen in many books, but by a more detailed history of each location. All aspects of the town have been included with

street scenes, churches, civic buildings, public houses, theatres and cinemas, together with the pier, holiday camp and beaches, which we associate with this well known seaside resort. The author has also included locations just outside Clacton such as Jaywick and Holland-on-Sea, which have also changed significantly.

The majority of modern photographs were taken by the author's wife, Linda Jacobs, who has thereby made a major contribution to this book. When looking at 'Then and Now' books, I cannot help thinking how many places appeared to be more attractive about one hundred years ago than now. We should be grateful to Norman Jacobs for selecting these historic photographs and for his valuable text, carefully recording the history of each view.

Adrian Corder-Birch



Your Book Reviewers are: Martin Astell, the Sound Archivist at the ERO; Adrian Corder-Birch, the Chairman of the Essex Journal Editorial Board; Jenepher Hawkins, the EJ Membership Secretary; Michael Leach, a retired GP; Stan Newens, a retired politician; Derek Watson, a singer/songwriter and family historian who lives in Heybridge.

EJ 20 Questions? Geoffrey Hare

Geoffrey Hare was born in Hampstead in 1937 but grew up in the war years in South Yorkshire. He left school at 16 and joined the staff of Rotherham Public Library, and after National Service in the Royal Artillery and the Education Corps he qualified as a librarian at Leeds Library School. He was librarian-in-charge of branch libraries in Rotherham until, in 1967, he became Divisional Librarian in Nottinghamshire and then Deputy County Librarian from 1974. In 1980 Geoffrey became the Deputy Director of Libraries Museums and Arts (County Librarian) for Cheshire. He arrived in Essex as County Librarian in 1983 and retired in 1997. It was during his time at Essex Library Service that Geoffrey led an EU funded project to re-establish the public library service in Romania and Hungary after the fall of communism. This project ended up to include all 14 former communist states. Geoffrey's involvement with the Essex VCH commenced in 1983 when Ray Powell was still editor and Sir William Addison was chairman. He currently runs a U3A Medieval History Group.

1. What is your favourite historical period?

The late European Middle Ages. Change and chaos heralding the modern world.

2. Tell us what Essex means to you?

Literally conception. All my ancestors lived on the Essex/Suffolk border.

‘singing ... in the Anderson shelter during the Sheffield blitz.’

3. What historical mystery would you most like to know? Why the barbarian tribes of northern Europe adopted Christianity.

4. My favourite history book is... *The Waning of the Middle Ages* by Johan Huizinga.

5. What is your favourite place in Essex? Copford village green: church, Georgian manor and cricket pitch.

6. How do you relax? By designing games: an occupation for a born voyeur.

7. What are you researching at the moment? Early 20th century naval technology.

8. My earliest memory is... singing ‘if I could find a tiny piece of love’ in the Anderson shelter during the Sheffield blitz.

9. What is your favourite song/piece of music and why? Haydn's *Nelson Mass* – sheer effervescence.



(Photograph, G. Hare)

10. If you could travel back in time which event would you change? I would prevent the creation of the German Empire in the nineteenth century.

11. Which four people from the past would you invite to dinner? I would be chary of inviting most famous people to dinner: their egos would prevent civilised conversation. Possibles are Alexis de Tocqueville, Mary Shelley, J.M. Keynes and Christine de Pisan – with babel fish, of course.

12. What is your favourite food? I have none.

13. The history book I am currently reading is... *Soldaten* by Neitzel & Welzer and *Edward III* by Ormrod (the new Yale edition).

14. What is your favourite quote from history? ‘Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it’, George Santayana.

15. Favourite historical film? Serge Bondarchuk's *War & Peace*. Nobody does Russian like a Russian.

16. What is your favourite building in Essex? St. Cedd's Chapel in the Othona fort at Bradwell for its atmosphere and tangle of associations.

17. What past event would you like to have seen? I would like to have attended the Council of Constance in 1415/16: a tragi-comedy on the grandest of scales.

‘With affection: the wish of all comedians.’

18. How would you like to be remembered? With affection: the wish of all comedians.

19. Who inspires you to read or write or research history? I have been inspired to read (and, in a derivative sense, to write) history by too many to name, but commencing with my Grammar School history teacher, Bob Whalley.

20. Most memorable historical date? August 1914; the date that marked the moral collapse of Europe.



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