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Spring 2015

VOLUME 50

EJ 20 Questions: Martin Stuchfield

Essex at Agincourt

A joint event organised by the Essex Record Office and the Essex Branch of the Historical Association

Mark the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt by joining us for talks from Professor Anne Curry, internationally-renowned expert on the Hundred Years War, Dr James Ross, an expert on the medieval nobility of East Anglia, and the English Warbow Society.

Saturday 31 October, 11.00am for 11.30am-3.30pm

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

Tickets: £15 for non-HA members: please book through the ERO on **033301 32500**
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Notes to contributors

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

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CONTENTS

Main cover illustration: Based on Christopher Saxton's 1576 map of Essex. (Courtesy of the ERO, MAP/CM/1/1 & H. Salisbury.)

EJ Editorial

Here we are then, volume 50 and what a milestone. I'm not sure that when I took over the helm of *Essex Journal* back in 2007, for the second issue of volume 42, that I had any idea of how long I would keep on editing! But here we are, almost eight years later and I'm still at it. In that time there has been much to learn as well as meeting lots of interesting people. Also the financial footing of the *EJ* has improved no end and in total over the past few years eight (yes eight!) extra pages have been produced by this issue with no increase in the subscription cost whatsoever. I do hope that you have all enjoyed the content as much as I have enjoyed bringing all the issues together. I think that a fair range of topics have been covered by a fantastic selection of authors. What's more there is plenty of exciting material to come which is lined up over the course of the next year and a bit. On top of this the Editorial Board are busy working away on funding applications to enable the 50 volumes, that will have been completed by the end of this year, to be indexed. This will then unlock the full potential of the content of the 4,806 pages that have been published since volume 1 back in 1966. Look out for more news of this soon.

So a forthcoming anniversary for the *Essex Journal* in a year that seems jam packed with them. There is such a wide range, from the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, 600 years since Agincourt, 200 since Waterloo, a whole host of First World War anniversaries as well as 75 years since Dunkirk, the fall of France and the Battle of Britain, 70 years since VE day, and the 50th anniversary of the death of Winston Churchill. For those that have been and gone, there has been some great coverage. I was quite moved with some of the programming around the death of Churchill. However, I thought there was rather a lot of unnecessary discussion by historians and commentators about Churchill's legacy and standing in the world. Comparing Churchill to our current social mores did not, I feel, bring anything new to the party. Surely, we can all appreciate that some of his nineteenth century outlooks, beliefs and actions would not be acceptable today. Just as Henry V at Agincourt would now be considered a war criminal for ordering the killing of prisoners, so Churchill could be pulled up on some of his decisions. He was a man of his time who was in the right place at the right time in 1940. Was this a case of historians trying to be just a bit too 'on message'? Anyway, the anniversaries keep on coming this year – perhaps I'll see you at the ERO Agincourt event that is taking place later on in the year (details on the inside cover)?

In this issue, as I mentioned above, there are another four extra pages which I have had no trouble in filling. Jason Townsend kicks off with an introduction to the *Essex Journal* website which in his capable hands promises to become a vital tool for publicity in this digital age. You can even pay your subscription on it if it is currently overdue! Hannah at ERO then follows on with a taster of what has been going on there over the course of the last six months before James Kemble gets the articles going with an interesting piece on the Essex estates of St Bartholomew's Hospital. Bringing it up to date, Tim Wander and Tony Crosby discuss what is left of the Marconi estate which was surprisingly extensive – so very much more than just New Street and so much that has disappeared over the not too distant past.

David Bissenden looks at the vital role that Tilbury Docks played in the First World War, and the fleeing of civilians from conflict rings a familiar tone with what is going on in the Mediterranean at the moment. Michael Leach follows with the curious tale of Robert Mitford and his will and the Chipping Ongar connection. I'm not sure you could have made up that story. Well done to Michael for finding these delicious nuggets of information – whatever will he find next? To finish off Ken Crowe looks in detail at what happened to the wounded from the Western front who happened to end up in hospital in Southend. This reminds us of the massive contribution of the Home Front to the war effort as well as the human suffering that also went on far from the fighting.

A selection of book reviews follows, with hopefully something to suit all tastes, and to finish off issue 1 of volume 50 I asked Martin Stuchfield if he would very kindly share with us his answers to the 20 Questions piece. Martin is an ideal candidate for this as he has been so instrumental in keeping *Essex Journal* going for the last 20 years or so. I am indebted to him for all his encouragement and support of my editorship over the past eight years so it is with great pleasure that, even though he is the busiest man in Essex that I know, I can bring you his answers. Now that he has finished answering these I'm sure he'll have time to finish off writing up important work relating to medieval Essex brasses – no excuses now Martin!!!

All for now,

Cheers,

Neil

The *Essex Journal* now has a stronger presence on the Internet with the creation of our new website www.essexjournal.co.uk. Now you are able to access information regarding past issues and read the latest news from the editorial team. To keep up with the latest news, you can join the *Essex Journal* email list or you can add the news feed to your email client using RSS. If you are already a subscriber, you can email the membership secretary (membership@essexjournal.co.uk) with your details so that you can be added to the email list. Hopefully, the editorial team will be able to send regular updates to you about the *Essex Journal* and associated platforms.

With the advent of the new website, you can now subscribe to the *Essex Journal* online. You can pay with a PayPal account or any major debit/credit card through PayPal. You can now email the Editor using the form on the Contact page of the website or using the new email address editor@essexjournal.co.uk. Over time we hope the website will become a comprehensive source of information on past issues of the journal and a portal for prospective new subscribers. At the time of going to press, the new website is far from comprehensive but it is anticipated that new content will be added often and the amount of information will become substantial and searchable.

Jason Townsend

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Reminder to subscribers: subscriptions for Volume 50 were due on 1st January 2015. If you have not yet renewed your sub. please do so promptly. Your continued support is appreciated.

News from the Essex Record Office

We have passed a major milestone since last writing for the *Essex Journal* as digital images for all 70,000 of our original wills have now been made available on Essex Ancestors. This means that all parish registers and wills are now included in our online subscription service, making it a goldmine of information for anyone tracing their Essex roots or researching English local or social history. The service is now in its fourth year and has users in countries around the world. Our digitisers are pressing on with the next project which is to digitise our electoral registers, so the information available will continue to grow and grow.

Our new events programme for 2015-16 has been launched, including a day looking at the involvement of Essex men with the Battle of Agincourt, walks, display, workshops, and bookbinding classes. Copies of the programme are available at ERO or upcoming events can be found online at: www.essexrecordofficeblog.co.uk/events

We have hosted two book launches so far this year – Jonathan Swan's *Chelmsford in the Great War* and Dr Paul Rusiecki's *Under Fire: Essex and the Second World War*. ERO felt like the perfect place to launch both books as their authors had used so much material from our collections, and we always like to see the outcome of all the research that goes on in the Searchroom.

The latter book launch was our first collaborative event with the Essex branch of the Historical Association and we look forward to working with them again later in the year on Essex at Agincourt on 31st October.

Several school groups have visited over the last few months, including pupils from North Primary in Colchester who visited as part of their First World War project We Will Remember Them, which is investigating the stories of former pupils from the school who fought and were killed in the War. We also welcomed pupils from Broomfield Primary School, who wrote a guest post on our blog about their experience at ERO. They seemed to be impressed with their visit, as they declared themselves 'amazed', and particularly enjoyed seeing the 'Broomfield Bible' which once belonged to King Charles I and is luxuriously embroidered with his royal arms. You can read that they had to say by going to the ERO blog (www.essexrecordofficeblog.co.uk) and searching for 'Broomfield school'.

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 hannahjane.salisbury@essex.gov.uk with 'e-bulletin' as the subject.

We hope to see you at the ERO soon!

Hannah Salisbury, Access and Participation Officer

Dr Paul Rusiecki cuts the cake at the launch of his book *Under Fire*. (ERO/H. Salisbury.)

The Medieval Essex Estates of St Bartholomew's Hospital, London

by

James Kemble

Bearing in mind that St Bartholomew's Hospital in Smithfield just outside the City walls has played such a prominent part in so many lives of Essex people since its founding in 1123, it is perhaps surprising that there is so little reference in Essex journal literature to the Hospital. Over the centuries it acquired many large and small farms and estates in Essex from which it gained an income sufficient to sustain the needy. This paper discusses the estates acquired in the twelfth to sixteenth centuries, many of which were still held in the twentieth.

The monk Rahere, a minor canon of St Paul's, went on pilgrimage to Rome where he fell ill; he vowed that if he returned to London he would build a hospital for the poor there. True to his word, he built the Augustinian priory church, St Bartholomew the Great, in the extant nave of which he is buried, together with the adjacent monastery and cloister just outside the City wall in *Smethefeld*, which the twelfth century monk Fitzstephen called *campus planus*, 'flat/smooth open ground'.

In 1123, King Henry I granted to the Priory the receipts from a weekly fair on Fridays in Smithfield and in 1133 an annual fair on 24th August which lasted three days. To these cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, poultry and other stock were driven in from Essex. To the fair all the drapers of London brought their wares and left them overnight within the protection of the priory walls.[1] Streets called Cloth Fair, Cowcross Street, Poultry Avenue and Cock Lane are still to be found at Smithfield. Duck Lane and Chick Lane have gone.

On Rahere's death in 1143, Thomas, a canon of the House of St Osyth, was appointed Prior in charge of 13 canons living in the Priory and Hospital. From the twelfth century benefactors were giving land and property to the Priory and the Hospital from which could be derived an income. Half the church of Danbury and the church of Theydon Bois given by William de Bosco came to the Priory.[2] One of the first acquisitions was the living of the nearby parish of St Sepulchre Without Newgate from the bishop of Salisbury. The Prior granted it to Hagno the clerk on condition that he pay the canons 50 shillings a year. Money was always short. Food and clothing for the sick were collected from the shops and houses, but imposters claiming to be collecting alms for the Hospital were rife, for, in 1324-7, the king ordered bailiffs to apprehend them.[3]

In 1170 the bretheren who were looking after the sick were granted the right to elect their own Proctor, later to be called Master. In 1285, Thomas de Whitchester, rector of Downham, was elected Master until his death 14 years later, and in 1302 Adam of Roding. Up till 1170 gifts were made to the Priory but subsequently the Hospital administered all such grants. By 1316 there were seven Bretheren and four Sisters serving the hospital, plus several lay brothers. Sisters wore grey tunics and over-tunics, no longer than to the ankles, the predecessors of the nurses' uniform and apron, though reference to 'nurses' first occurs in 1646. Sisters entering the Hospital for their lifetime to care for the sick, like some of the bretheren, brought an endowment. One, Edeva daughter of Wakerilde of Writtle, brought 10 shillings per annum for life, from rent of land in Smithfield.[4]

Patients came from as far as Norwich, Dunwich and from Essex, but many were collected from nearby Newgate Prison where conditions were dire. Many babies and children came under the care of hospital before they could be sent to suitable foster homes, orphanages or found apprenticeships; in 1444, the chaplain left money in his Will to pay for poor children's instruction in grammar and singing.[5]

Before 1200, the Hospital had been given land in Hatfield Broad Oak, four acres by Michael Clericus de *Atfeld* and his wife which Wlfric Lemerier had held [1477].[6] The grant of *Peryfeld* (Perry Field in 1838) was made *c.*1210 [1478]. *Circa* 1281, Adam de la Hoo paid rent of 2d to the Master for pasture he shared with the hospital next *le Done*, called Six Acre Downs in 1838 [1499]. These were part of Fryers Farm which the hospital still held in the nineteenth century with over 170 acres from which it collected tithes. Fields called *Coulase* and *Blakesad* were given to St Bartholomews in the thirteenth century and still retained their recognisable names Cow pasture and Blackfield in the nineteenth [1505]. Some relief from taxes was granted by Henry III who excused the bretheren from paying tallage on their Hatfield estate.[7] In 1277 the lord of Hatfield Robert the Bruce, father of Robert King of the Scots, promised to provide a chaplain at the Hospital to pray for the soul of his mother [1496].

Throughout the medieval period the Hospital continued to acquire lands throughout Essex. In Burnham, marshes called *Colewerd* and *Walmersh* were held by the Hospital before *c.*1210 [1467]. Six hundred years later in 1844 the hospital governors still held 116 acres of *Southward* which

probably represents *Walmersh*, for in 1269 Margaret la Brune of Hawkwell paid 20 shillings rent to the Hospital for *Suthwalesmers* in Burnham [1451]. The Mildmay family acquired *Colewerd* through marriage in 1629 and still held it tithe-free in the nineteenth century.[8] In Downham, the Hospital held 18 acres of a field called *Dalwedone* in 1333, reckoned as 16 acres still its property in 1843, then called *Dully Downs* tenanted by Sarah Clark, part of Friern Farm [1303].[9]

Relations with local interests were not always amicable; in 1342/3 a dispute between the Hospital and the Prior of Hatfield Regis about the ownership of Small Tithes was mediated by the bishop of London in favour of the Prior resulting in loss of revenue to the Hospital.[10] In 1415 William Hankeford and Robert Hill were instructed to investigate a dispute between the Master of the Hospital and the Abbot of Beeleigh about a tenement in Burnham, a case which was escalated up to the sheriff of Essex [1473]. The Master on occasion took tenants to court at King's Bench for failure to pay rent: in 1305 John Wyth of Havering was unable to pay the rent for his land in Rainham which was forfeited to the Hospital [1247].

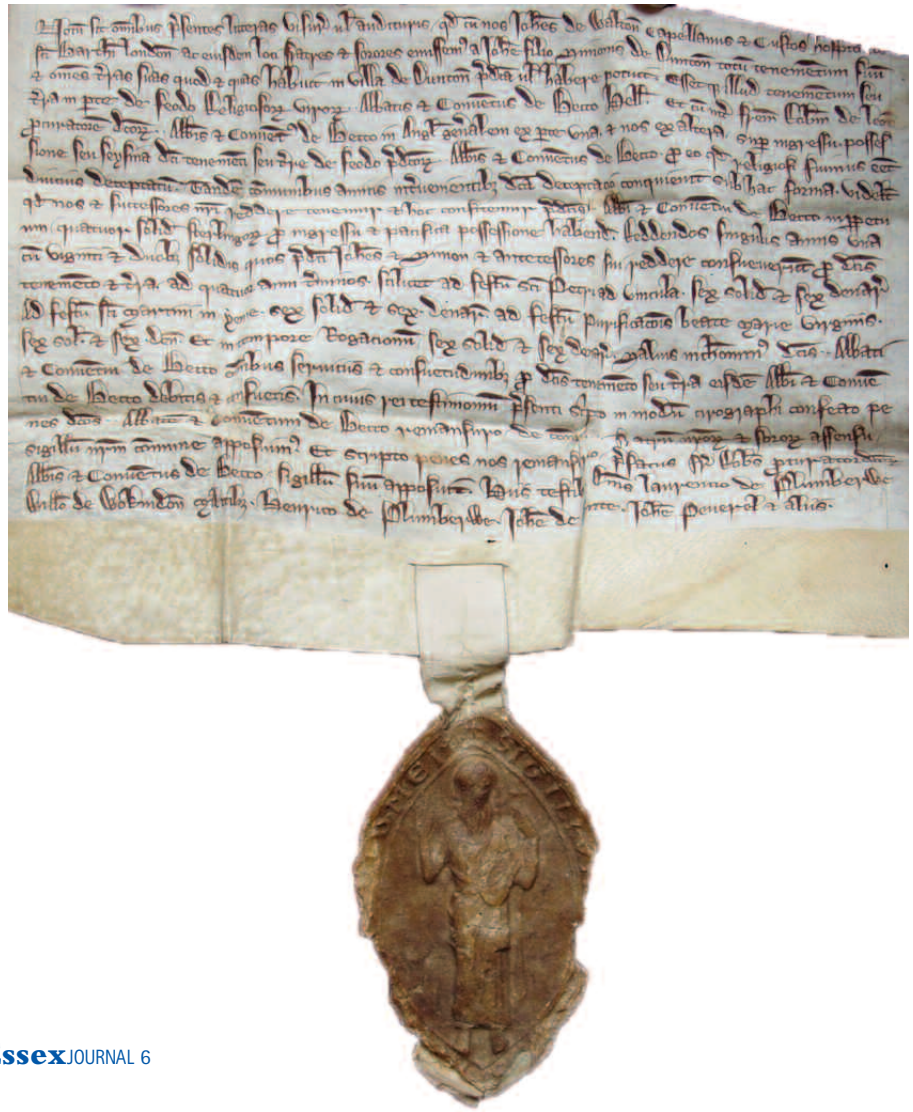
Benefactors of the Hospital included the largest landowners as well as smallholders. The Prior of the Knights Hospitaller of Jerusalem gave a house with 30 acres of land in Rainham in 1190 [1242]. The tenant William sent every year wheat, rye, barley, oats, hay and beans by ship up the Thames to the Hospital [1243]. In 1291 John Travers gave his father's inherited land to the Hospital in Little Burstead which included *Wolvindune*, probably recorded as Hover Hill in the nineteenth century Tithe Award [1396].[11] The Hospital also held property by purchase as tenants; the agreement, dated about 1227, between the Hospital and John son of Simon of Dunton for the purchase of all the tenements and land John held in Dunton from the abbot of Bec Heluin in Normandy is now in Kings College Cambridge library. The seal showing St Bartholomew holding a staff is attached (Fig 1).

Apart from monetary rent, services were paid to the Hospital: John Pather of Dunton agreed to mow, reap, measure and bind corn, and to store it at his own expense in barns whose upkeep for which he was responsible, the process to be overseen by one of the priory's brothers who would come to inspect the farm 'with a boy'. In return John was allowed to keep one quarter of the corn and one quarter of the malt, but he had to provide a bull and 12 out of the 24 cows he had, seemingly a significant rent for him to pay [1385]. This record, dated 1374, post-dates the historic reduction in population by the Black Death of 1348, indicating that tenants still had significant burdens.

In addition to land, the Hospital acquired the livings of several churches. In *c.*1210 the advowson of Little Wakering church and two acres there were given by William of Theydon for the soul of his brother [1415]. The agreement, with its seals, remains in the Hospital's archives. Income was received from the advowsons of Bradfield, Danbury, and Theydon Bois, as well as from property in Bobbingworth, Colchester, Elmdon, Maldon and Walthamstow.[12]

The greater monasteries such as St Pauls, Westminster and Barking were also accumulating land and property and there is evidence that there was a strategy of acquisition and exchange to

1. Thirteenth century charter of the abbot of Becc concerning purchase of an estate at Dunton. (Reproduced by courtesy of Kings College Library Cambridge.)



hold estates easily accessible by water or roads.[13] It is hard to detect any such purpose by the Master of St Bartholomews; rather he was glad to receive whatever he could. It seems probable that the reputation of care by the Hospital and the recognition of need made it likely that grants would be mainly in London, Middlesex and south Essex, so that rent of supplies and of money could be collected without excessively long journeys.

It is clear that the Hospital's location ensured that it was never far from incident. It was the site of public execution. Here in 1305 William Wallace, the Scot called 'Rebel' by the English, was hanged, drawn and quartered. In the fourteenth century, knightly jousting was held in Smithfield attended by Edward III and many nobles. In 1381, Wat Tyler had led the Peasants' Revolt, many of whom were Essex men, into Smithfield where they were confronted by Richard II and the Mayor of London, William Walworth, by whom he was stabbed, then dragged from the Hospital where he had sought sanctuary and beheaded. In 1446, a servant John David appeached his master William Catur of treason, the trial decided by dual at Smithfield. Catur's friends unfortunately plied him with so much wine that the servant killed him, though the outcome for the servant was not a happy one, he being hanged at Tyburn soon afterwards. In 1467, with Edward IV in attendance, Lord Scales, brother of the queen, was challenged by the Bastard of Burgoine to fight. The first encounter, on horseback, felled the Bastard's horse. In the second, fought on foot, Lord Scales' pole-axe pierced Burgoine's helm. It is likely that casualties from these affrays were brought in to the adjacent Hospital.[14]

When the St Bartholomews Priory was suppressed by Henry VIII, the Hospital was assessed at £35-5-7d yearly.[15] From 1545 can be traced the involvement in Essex of Walter Mildmay, younger brother of Thomas, the Master Auditor. In 1321 the Master of St Barthomews had granted to William de Elsyng, mercer, founder of a new hospital called St Mary Elsingesspytell, a shop for his lifetime at a rent of 50 shillings per annum in the London parish of St Pancras Soper Lane [855]. In 1431 the Prior of St Mary Elsyngspitell in London received property in Chelmsford part of which became the Crane Inn. Thomas Mildmay acquired this and adjoining houses at 4-6 High Street after St Marys had been suppressed in 1537.[16] Thomas and Walter were appointed auditors to the Court of Augmentations to assess which charitable bodies that had been deprived should continue. In 1589, Walter Mildmay, founder of Emmanuel College Cambridge, lived in a house built in the priory church's Lady Chapel and was buried in the nave of St Bartholomew the Great.

The City prevailed on King Henry in 1546 to grant Letters Patent constituting the Hospital in Smithfield as the parish of St Bartholomew the Less, one of the priory chapels, and it was allowed to retain many of its estates. William Turges, the king's chaplain, was appointed as Master, and Thomas Hyclyng, one of the brethren of the suppressed Hospital, a curate and a Visitor of Newgate Prison, as Vice-Master.[17] Four Aldermen of the City of London and eight Common Councillors became Governors. Each year on View Day the Lord Mayor of London makes visits to the Hospital to inspect the wards and attend a service at the parish church of St Bartholmew the Less within the hospital precincts.

Some time before 1321 the Hospital bretheren appointed from amongst their number a Renter responsible for recording its property, the rent due and properly collected. The Renters also recorded transfers by sale of land by the tenants: Serle de Marci sold land in Bulphan to his man (*homo*) for 38 shillings which produced four shillings rent [1408]. Record of individual grants and rents were collected in to the Hospital Cartulary from 1418 by the Renters such as John Cok and his successors. John Cok, born in 1392, of the family of Benek Cok, labourer, of Corringham[18] inserts personal asides such as that Stephen Paule, a leasehold baker of the Hospital, was the most famous baker in London! Each entry has been given a number from 1 to 1698 with those outside London starting at number 1167, that is 531 entries concerning entries not in London. The importance to the Hospital of its Essex properties is illustrated by the fact that no less than 329 of these relate to Essex. After the Great Fire in 1666 had destroyed much of the Hospital's rental property in the City, the financial impact of the outlying estates in Essex assumed significantly greater importance. So great was the loss of rent following the Fire that the king gave permission for the governors to turn rooms in the Great Cloister in the remains of the Priory into shops.[19]

Perhaps one of the Hospital's most distinguished physicians was William Harvey appointed in 1609 at a stipend of £25 per annum. Based firmly on animal experiment, cadaver dissection and observation, in 1628 and 1649 he published his seminal books *De Motu Cordis et Sanguinis*, on the Motion of the Heart, and *De Circulatione Sanguinis* on the Circulation of the Blood.[20] He resigned from the Hospital after the execution of Charles I to whom he had been ordered to attend during the Civil War, and was heavily fined by the ensuing Commonwealth. He was buried in the family vault in St Andrews church Hempstead in 1657, his remains now to be seen there in a large marble sarcophagus.

Distinctive cast iron Boundary Markers with the bell-shaped head and finial bearing the chevron of the hospital with the initials 'St BH' can still be

found at the edge of the hospital's properties. Accessible examples are southwest of St Mary's Church Little Wakering and on the northwest side of the church tower, and on the former sea-wall 350m south of Steeple Wick Farm.[21] (Fig 2).

By the end of the nineteenth century the Hospital's Essex property included estates in Asheldham, Barking, Burnham, Layer Marney, Downham, Dunton, Hatfield Regis, Hockley, Little Burstead, Mayland, St Lawrence, Steeple, and Little Wakering.[22] In 1919 the Hospital had to sell many properties in order to fund new building. Five farms at Steeple totalling 1,531 acres were sold by auctioneers Smith, Oakley and Garrard of St James's Square London for £20,700 to Mr Partridge who also bought 434 acres of Badnocks Farm in Asheldham for £5,000, 119 acres of South Ward Farm in Burnham for £3,100, and 272 acres of Mayland Hall for £3,500. Farms in Dengie, Downham, Dunton, Althorne and Hatfield Broad Oak were also sold.[23]

The proceeds of these sales contributed to the building of the Nurses' Home and King George V block on the south side of the hospital square, which contains wards and operating theatres. With significant reductions in its annual rental receipts, the Hospital continued to need income which it found increasingly difficult to raise, but in 1948 at the inception of the National Health Service it received £5 million pounds from the government to cover the clinical work. (It is interesting to compare this with an annual income in 1546 of £319-9-3d of which just £22 was available for care of the sick after provision for food and wages for the staff). The Hospital trustees kept the residual Endowment Fund separate, from which it has been able to contribute in significant ways to the well-being of patients and amenities.[24]

2. Estate boundary post, Steeple Wick. (Reproduced by courtesy of Essex County Council.)

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Acknowledgements

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The Author

After studying at Cambridge and London, the author took a degree in Archaeological Sciences. Formerly he was Consultant Surgeon to St Bartholomew's Hospital and currently is Coordinator of the Essex Place-names Project in conjunction with ERO, Essex Society for Archaeology & History and Essex University.

The Marconi legacy:

assessing the heritage of the wireless communication industry in Essex

by

Tim Wander and Tony Crosby

This article sets out to briefly trace the history of the development of the Marconi Companies in Essex based around key milestones in the development of wireless communications and the main sites on which Marconi's developed these technologies and manufactured the equipment. The significance of these sites to the history and heritage of the wireless communications industry will be assessed and their current condition highlighted in order to indicate what heritage of the industry in Essex survives and what has been lost forever. The most significant sites, which tell the story, will be discussed in detail but other sites for research and training, manufacturing and of social significance will also be mentioned.

Guglielmo Marconi (25/04/1874 – 20/07/1937)

Marconi was half Irish and half Italian, an inventor, electrical engineer and pioneer of wireless communication, often being credited as the 'inventor of radio', who in 1909 shared the Nobel Prize in Physics with the German Scientist Karl Ferdinand Braun 'in recognition of their contributions to the development of wireless telegraphy'. Marconi was responsible for building on the work of many previous experimenters and physicists and turning a series of laboratory experiments into a reliable and practical form of wireless communication, later known as radio. He was also both an entrepreneur and businessman, and founded in 1897 The Wireless Telegraph & Signal Company in Britain, which eventually became the Marconi Company. After 15 years of intensive struggle his Company went from strength to strength defining, designing and building the modern world of electronics, broadcasting and communications as we know it today.

Without question what Marconi did was to invent what became an entirely new and huge industry, the technologies of which changed the world forever. In his hands an obscure, and to most people unintelligible branch of physics and electrical engineering eventually became a simple consumer product. Throughout its operation the Marconi Company offices were always located in central London but from the earliest days the heart of the company's manufacturing, and after 1927 its research and development, were centralised around Chelmsford in Essex.

Why Chelmsford?

1898 had been a busy year for the young Italian inventor with tests and demonstrations taking place in the south of England and in Ireland, but despite all his success, publicity, demonstrations, tests, trials, and even Royal approval, the Company's order books were empty. He still believed that the orders would come and to meet anticipated demand for new equipment the Marconi Company sought new premises for manufacturing and administration. The existing Head Office at 28 Mark Lane in the City of London was already overcrowded and could never support the proposed expansion or any form of large scale manufacturing.

From his earliest research in London Marconi had found that his experiments were often plagued with electrical noise from tramways and lifts, and Chelmsford was still reasonably free from such problems. Chelmsford had other advantages as buildings were far cheaper outside London and the county of Essex is flat enough for wireless experiments and erecting aerials. Chelmsford also had a direct rail link into the capital and was reasonably near the Port of London whose huge volume of shipping represented one of the Marconi Company's immediate market places. Chelmsford also had in place a range of existing electrical and manufacturing industries including Crompton & Co Ltd who by 1881 offered a complete range of electrical systems. Crompton's designed and manufactured dynamos, switchgear, circuit breakers, motors and electric meters, as well as lamps. These Chelmsford based industries offered Marconi a ready trained workforce and industrial support network.[1]

Hall Street, Chelmsford

In December 1898, Marconi took out a 20 year lease on Messrs. Wenleys' furniture store in Hall Street, Chelmsford, which had been built by John Hall in 1858 as a steam driven silk mill. This mill closed in 1863 due to the decline in the Essex silk industry, but Courtaulds of Braintree, who survived the downturn in the trade, ran the mill from 1865 until 1892 when it became Messrs. Wenleys' furniture storage depot.[2]

Hall Street now became the world's first wireless equipment factory, initially employing just 26 men and 2 boys. It was set up to manufacture wireless sets and receivers to Marconi's latest designs, but the new science was still in its infancy and the Company struggled, so had to diversify into manufacturing motor-car ignition coils, X-ray

apparatus and other scientific equipment in order to balance the books. Although having a large factory for such a nascent industry was ambitious, previously the wireless equipment had been built by hand as required, using various modified apparatus bought from established scientific laboratory suppliers, a process that could never hope to cope with quantity production of commercial equipment. To fulfil any commercial order, especially for the Royal Navy, all equipment parts had to be interchangeable and all apparatus had to be built to a high quality and designed to be easily serviced and maintained. At the Hall Street works new departments responsible solely for their own specific areas of research, design and manufacture were established. In September 1899 a transmitting station was built directly across the road from the factory premises to test equipment as it came off the production line and the Hall Street mast soon became one of Chelmsford's landmarks, although now long gone.

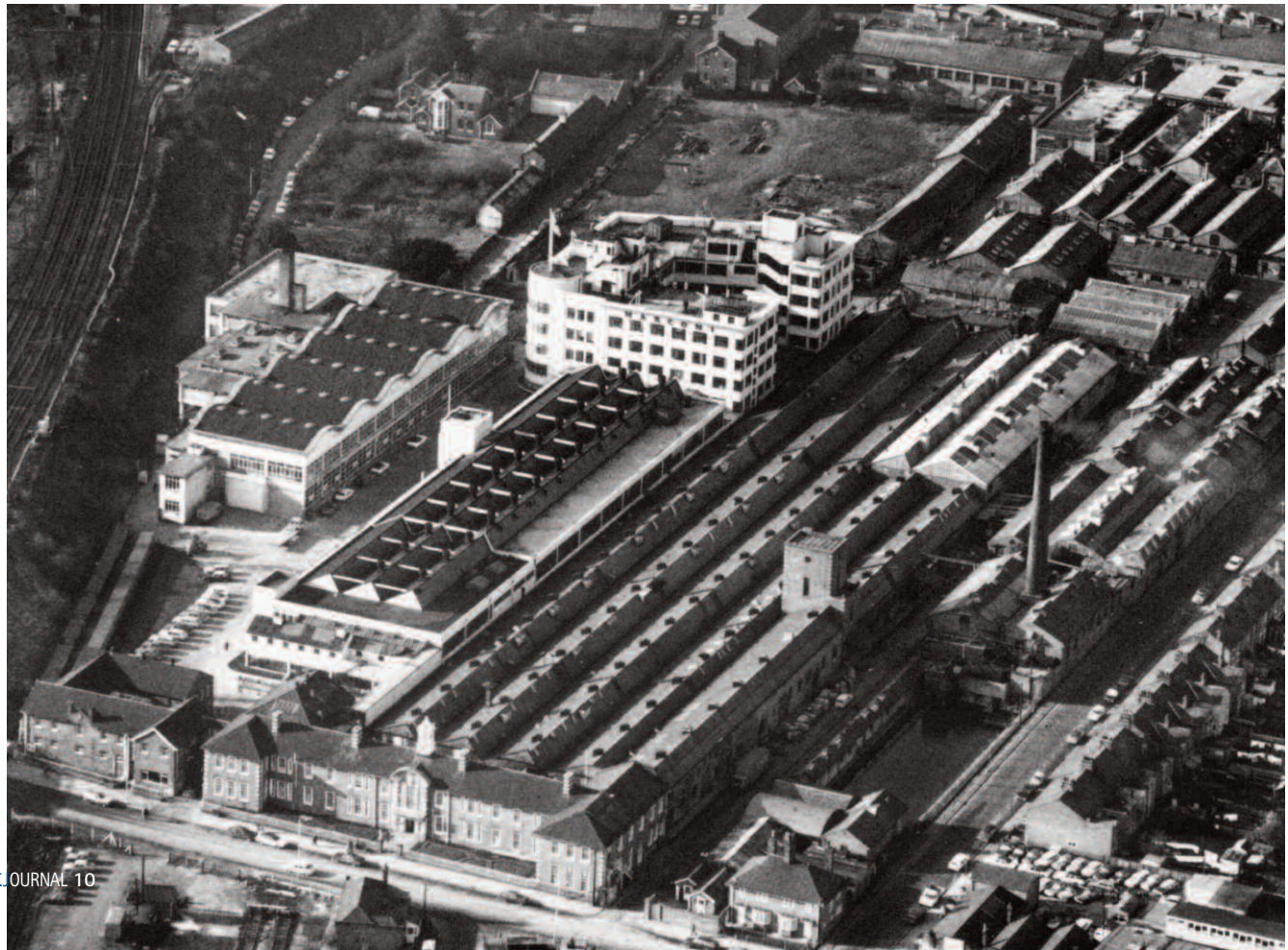
Marconi wireless equipment became the corner stone of the growing number of shore based wireless stations and his equipment was carried on-board all the great Atlantic liners including the *Lusitania*, *Mauretania*, *Baltic*, *Olympic* and the ill-fated *Titanic*, all built at Hall Street. All the equipment for the Royal Navy, the network of coastal stations and numerous other merchant vessels was built there. Equipment from Hall Street was used at the Poldhu station in Cornwall that allowed Marconi to send the Morse code 'S' across the Atlantic in December 1901 and equipment built here was sent around the world.[3]

After Marconi's left in 1912 the Hall Street factory building served for many years as the Mid Essex Divisional Offices of the Essex and Suffolk Water Company. In 2010 the water company vacated the site and the adjacent, original Chelmsford waterworks site of the 1850s was sold for housing. However, the world's first wireless factory has survived with the exterior more or less unchanged. The Marconi work's sign has long since gone but the building can be considered to the birthplace of the radio and electronics industry in this country, a blue plaque records its place in history and the building is Listed Grade II. The factory building has remained empty since 2010 and is now the subject of development proposals for private residential and commercial uses, although there are hopes to use some of the building as a Marconi Heritage Centre.

New Street, Chelmsford

In January 1912 Marconi's new Managing Director Godfrey C. Isaacs proposed building the world's first purpose designed and built wireless factory on the local cricket ground in Chelmsford

1. Marconi's New Street site 1939. The world's first purpose built wireless factory - ready to meet the demands of World War 2 employing over 10,000 people. The factory was to operate 24 hours per day for the entire war period producing huge volumes of wireless sets for the RAF, Navy and army along with radar systems and numerous components critical to the war effort.(By Kind permission of GEC Marconi.)



that was owned by the Church Commissioners. This whole site would be known as the Marconi New Street Works. (Figs 1 & 2) Architects William Dunn and Robert Watson of London were commissioned to draw up plans for the first factory to be specifically designed for the construction of Marconi's wireless equipment. The hope was that the new factory would be finished and working by mid-June 1912, an almost impossible target, in order to show off the factory on 22nd June to leading competitors, Government officials and other experts who would then be in London for the Wireless Conference. Godfrey Isaacs's plans were not just for a new factory; he wanted the new complex to be a complete self-contained village within a town. To the north two new roads - Marconi Road (Fig 3) and Bishop Road - of cottages would be built for the Company employees.

Construction, using 500 men, started on 26th February 1912 and despite a short building strike, just 17 weeks later, the changeover from Hall Street to the new 70,000 square foot (6,500 m2) New Street factory complex was accomplished in just one weekend.[4] The original offices and factory were much extended over the years: in 1927 additions had been made to support work on the imperial wireless system and further extensions followed in 1936 to handle the volume of work. In 1938 the five-storey Art Deco Marconi House was constructed and in 1941 Building 46 was added at the Glebe Road end of the site for high power transmitter development. After the war the canteen Building 720, which at the time had the largest unsupported roof span, was added. The site probably reached its maximum degree of sprawl by 1980, but in 1992 it was decided to remove most of the buildings in the western half of the site, including Building 46. In their place rose Eastwood House, to be used by Marconi Radar after they had vacated the old Crompton Works on Writtle Road.

The fate of the New Street site was sealed following the spectacular collapse of the Marconi Company in 2001. A successor company, Selex, remained until 2008 when the factory was abandoned. January 2013 saw the start of the demolition of most of the site for residential redevelopment. All that remains are the Grade II Listed office building fronting New Street, the water tower and power house, plus Eastwood House. A blue plaque on the office frontage records the fact that the world's first radio broadcast was made by Dame Nellie Melba from this site and there is an interpretation board recording the significance of the site. All that remains associated with Marconi's in the vicinity of

2. Marconi's New Street site 2013. Only Marconi House (now demolished), the front office range, water tower and power station remain. Eastwood House construction had led to the demolition of Building 46, along with the paint, plating and carpenters workshops. The site is now completely redeveloped as housing, office space and car parking. (By Kind permission of GEC Marconi.)

3. Marconi Road, company housing. (T. Crosby.)

New Street, as is so often the case, are the staff cottages in Marconi Road and Bishop Road.[5]

Writtle

In 1919 the Marconi Company urgently needed a location that was remote from the electrical noise and the high power transmitters being developed and tested in the main Chelmsford New Street works for researching the use of radios in aircraft. The plan was to move the newly formed Marconi Airborne Telephony Research Department to the village of Writtle, making use of a former Royal Flying Corps hut and landing field in Lowford (now Lawford) Lane (Figs 4 & 5). Marconi's had long been recognised as the pioneers of trans-oceanic and maritime wireless services and by 1920 at Writtle they had evolved to be the only aircraft radiotelephony development group in the world. The remit was to provide the emerging new market for commercial aviation with reliable long-range communications equipment, which would be essential for its safe development and operations. When on 25th August 1919 the world's first commercial scheduled service was started from London's first civil aerodrome on Hounslow Heath, each aircraft carried an early wireless set designed and built by the Marconi team at Writtle. The apparatus was manufactured at New Street but the design, development, testing, demonstrating and installation was all controlled by the Writtle staff.

Following the first radio broadcast by Dame Nellie Melba from the New Street works radio broadcasting became a sensational success and the task of making it all happen, to build a transmitter and operate a broadcasting station

4. Marconi's Writtle site 1922. A lone ex-army hut in the middle of a partly flooded Essex field was destined to become the birthplace of British Broadcasting and the BBC using callsign 2MT - Two Emma Toc.
(By Kind permission of GEC Marconi.)

was given to Marconi's Airborne Telephony Research Department in Writtle; the future of British radio broadcasting would be determined in an ex-army wooden hut on the edge of a large Essex field! From 14th February 1922, for 11 months, until 17th January 1923 the young engineers launched and sustained the first regular scheduled public radio broadcasting service in Britain from a timber hut with the call sign 2MT. The success of the Writtle broadcasts led directly to the formation of the BBC. On 14th November 1922, at 6 pm the first regular broadcast was made from Marconi House in the Strand. Peter Eckersley became the BBC's first Chief Engineer, and he took most of the Writtle pioneers with him to build the new National Broadcasting service from the ground up. When he joined he knew he was the Chief Engineer because he was the BBC's only engineer. When he left, six and a half years later, he was in charge of 304 engineers and technicians. Under his technical stewardship by 1926 the BBC had grown to become the world's leading Broadcasting service and could boast ten main transmitting stations, ten relay stations and over two million listeners. From an original staff of four the company had grown to 552 in number. From its lone voice in Writtle in 1922, the various stations of the BBC could now be heard by 55% of the country at a strength suitable for reception on a crystal set and it could also be heard across Northern Europe.[6]

The Marconi Writtle site then formed the centre of the Marconi's airborne radio research effort throughout the 1920s and 1930s. When war threatened in the late 1930s, the RAF was still using radio equipment with very limited facilities and ranges. New equipment specifications and a contract were given to Marconi's in October 1939, who were appointed as the main contractor for design and production. One of the design teams was lead by one of Marconi's chief designers (later Sir) Christopher Cockerell (of Hovercraft fame), then a senior engineer with the Marconi Company at Writtle. Work upon the first of these Bomber Command sets was begun on the 22nd October 1939, and it was completed and flight-tested on 2nd January 1940. This was an incredible feat of engineering, project management and manufacturing. Much of the work was done by the Development department in the original Writtle hut, which had now been joined by a random group of similar laboratories, also based in huts. Complete equipment was installed in operational RAF Bomber Command aircraft by teams of Company engineers just five months later in June 1940, a notable achievement for all who worked on the project in such a short space of time. Over 80,000 sets of equipment were manufactured during the war, the majority of them being used by RAF and the other Commonwealth air forces.

5. Marconi's Writtle site 1980. The GEC-Marconi site developed in the aeronautical wireless development branch employing over 1,200 people. It played a key role in WW2 as the design centre for RAF wireless equipment. The site was closed in 1987 and demolished soon after to be replaced by housing. (By Kind permission of GEC Marconi.)

Following the end of the Second World War, the Writtle site continued to grow, eventually becoming an important part of the Marconi Communication Systems Limited Company, but the site was closed on 11th November 1987 and redeveloped for housing as Melba Court where today only an interpretation board records the heritage of the site. Beforehand, however, in 1960 the hut from which the first public broadcasts were made was moved to Kings Road School in Chelmsford and has subsequently been acquired by Chelmsford Museums and is now at Sandford Mill Museum.

The Writtle site also used a site at Guys Farm, just 100 metres from the main Marconi site at the top of Lawford Lane. Thought to have been purchased at auction sometime in the early 1930s, until March 1965 the farm housed the Marconi Specialised Components Division manufacturing group, which moved to a new factory at Billericay. This Division, which had been formed in July 1962, had as its primary function the design and manufacture of specialised components which were unobtainable, to the specifications demanded, from outside sources of supply. In the period 1962-5 these activities expanded to the point where nearly 300 components were on general offer. In 1969 the Guys Farm site housed the mechanical engineering laboratory and during the 1980s it was used for system integration and customer system reference models. The Guys Farm site continued in use until the main site's closure and still retained its milking parlour and tiled floors and walls from its farm days. The farm has now been demolished and the site used for a modern housing development.[7]

Great Baddow

In 1937 the Marconi Company brought together their various radio, television and telephony research teams in a single location, the Art Deco style Marconi Research Centre in Great Baddow. Research at this site spanned military and civilian technology covering the full range of products, including radio, radar, telecommunications and microelectronics. As the electronics industry developed the campus expanded during the 1940s and 1950s to include research into general physics, high voltage, vacuum physics and semiconductors. At its peak the Centre employed more than 1,200 engineers, technicians, craftsmen and support staff. The centre is extant, now being the BAE Systems Advanced Technology Centre. The site includes a prominent local landmark, the 360-foot (110 m) high former Chain Home radar transmitter tower moved here by Marconi's *c.*1954 from RAF Canewdon. It is one of only five Home Chain radar masts from WWII remaining nationally and the only one to retain its three platforms.

Waterhouse Lane and Westway, Chelmsford

The English Electric Valve Company factory in Waterhouse Lane was set up by Marconi's in 1942 as a wartime production unit to make electrical valves and the newly developed magnetron, a powerful generator of microwaves, which was the heart of the improved precision radar sets of 1943 essential for night location of U-boats (to win the Battle of the Atlantic) and to beat the night bombers. Before the end of the war seven types of magnetron were being produced at a rate of 500 per week. The English Electric Valve Co Ltd was formed in 1947 to take over this factory since when it has been developing and making a range of electronic tubes for peaceful purposes such as television, marine radar and industrial heating. In addition tubes are made for defence and special purposes, including 'seeing in the dark' sights needed by soldiers and firemen. The company was renamed to e2v Technologies in 2002 as part of a management buyout following the collapse of the Marconi group. This important factory survives in use in Waterhouse Lane, Chelmsford, partly concealed behind inter-war housing and the remaining buildings of Waterhouse Farm, including a *c.*1600 Grade II Listed barn now converted to the social club.

Also on Waterhouse Lane Marconi's acquired a site as a sports ground in 1919. Due to the post-war expansion of business, which severely overloaded the New Street factory and offices, some activities had to be moved out and the sports ground site was developed from 1954 as a modern broadcast and television studio design centre. The post-war Marconi series of TV cameras was largely designed here, first black and white (1949) and then colour (1954), together with all associated equipment including telecine and later videotape equipment (for recording and reproducing TV programmes on film and on magnetic tape respectively). All this equipment was manufactured at the New Street factory where sound broadcasting transmitters had been designed and made since 1922 and TV transmitters since 1935. The Waterhouse Lane factory opened in 1964 to take over the manufacture of this equipment from New Street but closed in 1999 and was demolished in 2001. The adjacent Marconi bowls club, and rifle and pistol club, that traced their history back to WWII were also demolished. The site is now occupied by a Homebase DIY store and small commercial premises.

In April 1900 Marconi had formed The Marconi International Marine Communication Company Limited, known as Marconi Marine, to provide the shipping industry with radio equipment and trained radio officers. In 1962 the Company moved its activities from New Street to 'Elettra House' (named after Marconi's research yacht), a purpose-built

site on Westway, Chelmsford. Marconi Marine also provided communications equipment for the expanding offshore oil industry. Following the collapse of Marconi's this site was demolished and redeveloped as a car showroom.

Writtle Road, Chelmsford

The Marconi Company had been active in radar from the earliest days of the new science and its specialised systems company, Marconi Radar Systems Ltd, once had a leading place in the industry. Its products were used by all the British armed services and by the UK civil airport authorities. The company was the largest radar manufacturer in the UK, employing about 3000 people at the Chelmsford and Gateshead works. After starting at the New Street Works, Marconi Radar moved in 1968 to the factory originally built in 1896 by Crompton & Co in Writtle Road, Chelmsford. Marconi's closed the factory in 1992 and the whole site was demolished a few years later apart from the small office block fronting on Writtle Road, now a pharmacy. A large housing development occupies the rest of the site.

Other Sites in Essex

Marconi's had a presence on dozens of other sites throughout Essex, developed during the hundred plus years of its existence, not only for research, design and manufacturing, but also for staff training, for community and social purposes. Many of the sites were small and short lived and hence of minor significance, while others, including those discussed above, were of major significance historically, technically and archaeologically. Many of these significant sites have been lost apart from their facades (such as New Street and Writtle Road) or in total (such as the Writtle sites, Waterhouse Lane and Elettra House), while others have survived (such as Hall Street, Great Baddow and e2v on Waterhouse Lane).

The building in Frinton which housed the world's first radio college, the Wireless Telegraph School of 1901 survives, as does Springfield Place, Chelmsford, which was used as a training and drawing office and apprentice accommodation in the 1970s. However, the Marconi School of Wireless Communications established in 1921 in Arbour Lane, Chelmsford has been demolished and replaced with housing. The Social Club which was in a former Victorian school building on the corner of New Street and Victoria Road has also been lost to the redevelopment of the site as has its replacement in Beehive Lane. In 1903 Marconi's built a wireless receiver station in Broomfield, Chelmsford, which by 1911 was also used for research and training, and continued in use until the 1960s, but this has also been cleared for housing. Many others of the radio station sites have been lost with no indication of their existence. One exception is the Ongar Radio Station of 1922, one of the most advanced radio stations in the world at the time, which has been lost, but the adjacent 12 staff houses still called Marconi Bungalows on Epping Road at North Weald survive as the only evidence (as with the staff houses adjacent to the New Street factory) of former Marconi activity in the area (Fig 6).

However, a number of the more recent industrial units have survived as they are now used by successor companies. These sites include Christopher Martin Road, Basildon to which the Marconi Aeronautical Division moved from New Street in 1954 and which now houses Selex; the

6. Marconi Bungalows, North Weald. (T. Crosby.)

Bushy Hill Radar Research Station of 1954 in South Woodham Ferrers now used by BAE Systems; the Marconi Specialised Components Division building of 1965 in Radford Crescent, Billericay, although this is now under threat; and Taveloc House in Freebournes Road, Witham built in 1967 as a microelectronics factory.

Conclusion

For over 100 years the Marconi Companies' work in Chelmsford and Essex dominated and defined the modern age of electronics, radio, radar, and mobile communications. The company had a massive impact on the working and social lives of thousands of Essex people, as well as on the County's townscapes, especially that of Chelmsford, 'reinforcing the importance of Essex in the global history of telecommunications'.[8] The collapse of the Marconi group in 2001 still ranks as one of the greatest catastrophes in British industrial history, but its built legacy is being rapidly eroded as the buildings where all the work occurred are redeveloped, having not been awarded the protection that such significant sites deserve. Only two of all these dozens of sites are protected, the Hall Street and New Street buildings being Grade II Listed, the former being redeveloped as private residential and commercial premises, so the public will not be able to have access to the building to learn about its significance to history and heritage of the City.

Our industrial heritage has great value and many benefits.[9] The Marconi built legacy is highly significant to Chelmsford especially, as this is where Marconi's had the greatest impact on people and place, but also to the whole of Essex, nationally and internationally. Preserving and interpreting for current and future generations this wealth of industrial heritage has educational, financial (including tourism), community and social, and environmental benefits. Former industrial buildings are evidence of how earlier generations worked and lived, some within living memory, and hence have archaeological and historical educational value. They can give local communities a sense of their identity. They can be adapted to new uses benefitting the local economy through regeneration providing employment opportunities and attracting tourists who wish to study this aspect of the County's industrial past. Well-designed preservation of historic buildings adds individual character to the townscape much appreciated by local communities and visitors alike.[10] The adaptation of historic buildings, as opposed to demolition and new build on the cleared site, has been proven to have greater environmental benefits.[11]

Just as the visible remains of prehistoric burials, castles, abbeys and grand houses are reminders of this country's rich and diverse cultural heritage spanning many thousands of years, so also are the factories and workshops reminders of a more recent era of urban work and life, a tangible reminder of our past, indicating where we have come from and how we have arrived at our present world. It is essential therefore that what survives of our recent past is surveyed and recorded in order to inform a developing conservation and planning policy so that significant examples are preserved for future generations. Once this industrial heritage is destroyed it is lost forever and cannot be replaced.

This article has identified just a few of the dozens of sites in Essex where the telecommunications age was developed. It is a declining resource, the remaining elements of which need to be quickly assessed for their significance to the history and heritage of the industry and afforded the most appropriate protection, made accessible by and interpreted for the current and future generations.

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Tilbury Docks in the Great War: the Dutch & Belgian Connection

by

David Bissenden

The 100th anniversary of the start of the Great War has seen much focus given to the diplomatic events leading up to the outbreak of hostilities as well as to the fighting in Europe. Nearer to home there were important links between Essex and the continent, which allowed communications to continue despite the war. The port of Tilbury, and the ferry routes which connected it to neutral Holland, played an unpublicised role in the early years of the war, which this article will highlight.

One of Britain's important merchant shipping ports during the First World War was Tilbury Docks. The port had been opened in 1886 and so was already well established by the outbreak of the war in 1914. In terms of being an embarkation point for troops and supplies it was less important than the south coast ports, particularly Folkestone, Southampton and Dover- which were the gateway to France and the 'Western Front'. However Tilbury, along with the other major east coast port of Harwich, was a key port for North Sea shipping including the routes to Antwerp in Belgium and Flushing in Holland.

One aspect of Tilbury's role can be seen in the events leading up to the 11 day siege of Antwerp in late September to early October 1914. The war commenced on 4th August 1914 and Germany had invaded Belgium en route to France soon after. The fighting was causing massive casualties in Belgium so there was a pressing need for extra hospitals and trained medical staff to relieve the suffering.

On the 20th September 1914 a number of nurses and doctors, led by Mrs Sinclair Stobart, left Tilbury on the SS *Dresden* and travelled to Antwerp under the auspices of the 'St Johns Ambulance Brigade'. They embarked at 8.30pm that evening but did not leave the Thames until 7am due to the fouling of the anchor. They arrived in Antwerp on the 22nd September via the River Scheldt which flowed through neutral Dutch waters. This journey was documented by one of the doctors on board – Mabel. L Ramsay.[1]

'The scenes of wild panic along the quays at Antwerp as soon as the bombardment began are beyond all attempts at description. Frantic crowds of women and children and old men swarmed down to the Scheldt struggling madly along every approach, all clamouring to be taken off in whatever vessels there were available…Tugs and open row-boats, lighters and barges, were instantly crammed with fugitives.'
***The Illustrated War News*, 11/10/1914. (Author's collection.)**

The nurses and doctors then set up, and worked in increasingly difficult conditions in the 120 bed Auxiliary Red Cross Hospital in Antwerp. The city was under siege and the constant shelling had cut off clean water supplies leaving the only drinking water available sourced from old wells - which was dangerous to drink. Also due to the fear of German bombing no lighting was available at night so emergency operations had to be done by candlelight. Casualties were mostly from the French and Belgian armies. The ferocity of the fighting and the type of injuries occurring was clearly a surprise to the medical staff. One of the nurses, an Australian Sister Evelyn Trestail said of the wounded: 'No words can describe the awfulness of the wounds, bullets are nothing. It is the shrapnel that tears through the flesh and cuts off limbs and many gashes that one cannot possibly describe.'[2]

The constant German bombardment of the city made conditions almost impossible and prevented any ships leaving or entering the port. Finally, on the 8th October the medical staff were forced to leave the city as it was about to fall, and so they set off west for the channel port of Ostend, via Ghent. Just getting out of Antwerp was a problem as by now the city was burning due to the incessant German shelling. They managed to obtain a lorry from the British forces and got across the River Scheldt on 'The Bridge of Barges' (a temporary pontoon bridge) and the only route out of Antwerp going west. Soon after their escape the retreating marines destroyed it. Other injured marines were carried on double decker London buses -these were the buses that had previously brought British

relief troops into Antwerp, under the command of Winston Churchill.

The buses jolted along the cobbled and damaged Belgian roads with the wounded marines on board in agony. The nurse M.E. Clark from The British Field Hospital for Belgium wrote about it some years later 'all those inside passengers were either wounded in the abdomen, shot through the lungs, or pierced through the skull, often with their brains running out through the wound, whilst we had more than one case of men with broken backs'.[3] They finally reached Ostend, exhausted by the ordeal, from where they sailed to Folkestone, arriving home safely.

Another aspect of the invasion of Belgium was the growth in the number of Belgian refugees. In total about 250,000 Belgians left their country for England because of the fear of what the occupying Germans would do to them. A popular route for this escape was initially Antwerp to Tilbury until this option was lost with the German siege in October 1914. However this wasn't the end of the story. Just north of Antwerp was the border with neutral Holland, and further along the estuary of the River Scheldt is the port of Vlissingen - then known as Flushing. Many Belgians escaped across the border then quietly took the regular shuttle boat from Flushing to Tilbury and freedom. This went on until spring 1915. After this time escape from Belgium became more difficult due to the electrified fence that the Germans installed along the border's entire length. Escapees across the border in 1915 included wounded British soldiers who had been cared for by Nurse Edith Cavell at her hospital in Brussels. The Germans retaliated by executing her in October 1915.

Other escapees from Antwerp included the 15,000 Russian Jews who worked in the cities diamond trade. After they arrived at Tilbury and other east coast ports, they mostly moved to London- initially staying at hostels in Shoreditch and Oxford Circus before being absorbed into the existing Jewish community. Other refugees who had arrived at Tilbury docks were taken by train to Victoria station then on to the temporary accommodation at Earls Court Exhibition Hall and Alexandra Palace in London. On one night, Earls Court had 1,500 refugees sleeping in the exhibition halls.[4] They were then moved out to every corner of Britain and many later played a crucial role in the war effort providing labour for munitions factories and the like. One group worked at the Wilkins Jam factory in Tiptree, Essex. The museum there has a frieze produced by the refugees who worked at the farm and factory done out of gratitude for their stay at Tiptree.[5]

Of course many Belgians didn't come via Tilbury at all. On the 14th October 1914 a total of 5,000 injured Belgian soldiers disembarked at Dover. They were then sent to hospitals throughout England including Hylands House, near Chelmsford and the Palace Hotel (renamed Queen Mary Naval Hospital) on Southend seafront. Local residents would stand outside the 'Palace' and the ever enterprising Belgians would drop tin cans, tied to the end of lengths of string, to the Southend residents standing below the balconies. They would then fill them with sweets and tobacco and pass them back up to the grateful patients![6]

There was also surprising traffic leaving from Tilbury. In July 1915 the German aviator and prisoner of war, Gunther Pluschow, escaped from England as a stowaway on the SS *Julianna*, which sailed regularly from Tilbury to Flushing. He got onto the ship via a dangerous journey across the Thames in a small rowing boat and climbed on board and hid. He was the only German POW to escape during the war and reach Germany.

So what became of the doctors and nurses who had left Tilbury on the SS *Dresden* on the 20th September 1914 bound for Antwerp? Most continued to work in field hospitals for the rest of the war in locations such as Northern France and Serbia and many were decorated for their good work. The SS *Dresden* fared less well. In 1915 due to anti German feeling its name was changed to *Louvain* (a town in Belgium) and it ceased its civilian role and became a Royal Naval vessel- HMS *Louvain*. Sadly, on the 21st January 1918, it was torpedoed in the Aegean Sea and sunk with the loss of 224 lives.[7]

The *Louvain* was just one of the ships sunk by U boats after all-out war was declared on Allied shipping by Germany in March 1915. Many of those who lost their lives were Port of London Authority staff and their names can still be found on the War Memorial at the London Cruise Terminal at Tilbury riverside.

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The Author

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‘A fantastical will’:

Ongar castle and the Mitford mausoleum

by

Michael Leach

On 21st July 1835, at his London home in Upper George Street, Robert Mitford, a former judge in the Bengal civil service, signed his will in the presence of two solicitor’s clerks. It is a surprising document, verbose and deeply embittered, and it requires careful reading, clause by clause, to understand the problems subsequently faced by his executors. The preamble abandoned the usual convention of ‘This is the last Will and Testament of...’ and began with the blunt statement that he had destroyed his previous will in the presence of witnesses because ‘circumstances in my family’ had completely altered his mind about how he wished to dispose of his estate. He emphatically stressed his intention to cancel all previous bequests to his wife, his brother and his nephew, coupled with a threat that any attempt by them to challenge his new will would be considered ‘an overt act of hostility’ and would annul even the small bequests that he intended to make to them. He also noted ‘it is my will and desire that even the Law itself shall not intervene or prevail’ in the disposal of his estate, an instruction that was, in due course, to be ridiculed by the Vice Chancellor.[1]

The first clause stated that he had already made provision for his wife in a deed of separation drawn up in April 1835. This provided her with an income of £600 per annum for life. She was also entitled to the interest on 20,000 sicca rupees (about £2000) which he had settled on her when they married in Bengal in 1804.[2] On her death, his trustees were to seek the return of this capital as part of his estate.

The second clause expressed his grievance against his brother John, a Church of England clergyman in Suffolk. In language most unusual for a will, he accused him of misuse of loans amounting to about £10,000. He referred to his brother’s ‘evil habits and propensities’ and stated that his son (Robert Mitford’s only nephew) was illegitimate.[3] In the most emphatic language, he excluded his brother from any inheritance, including his share of their jointly owned properties. He noted that earlier attempts to assist his nephew had been met with ‘every offence and the blackest ingratitude’ from his ‘unnatural parents’. The third clause justified, in similar terms, the much reduced bequest to his nephew, and added that a letter attached to his will would provide him, and his father, with a detailed explanation of this decision.

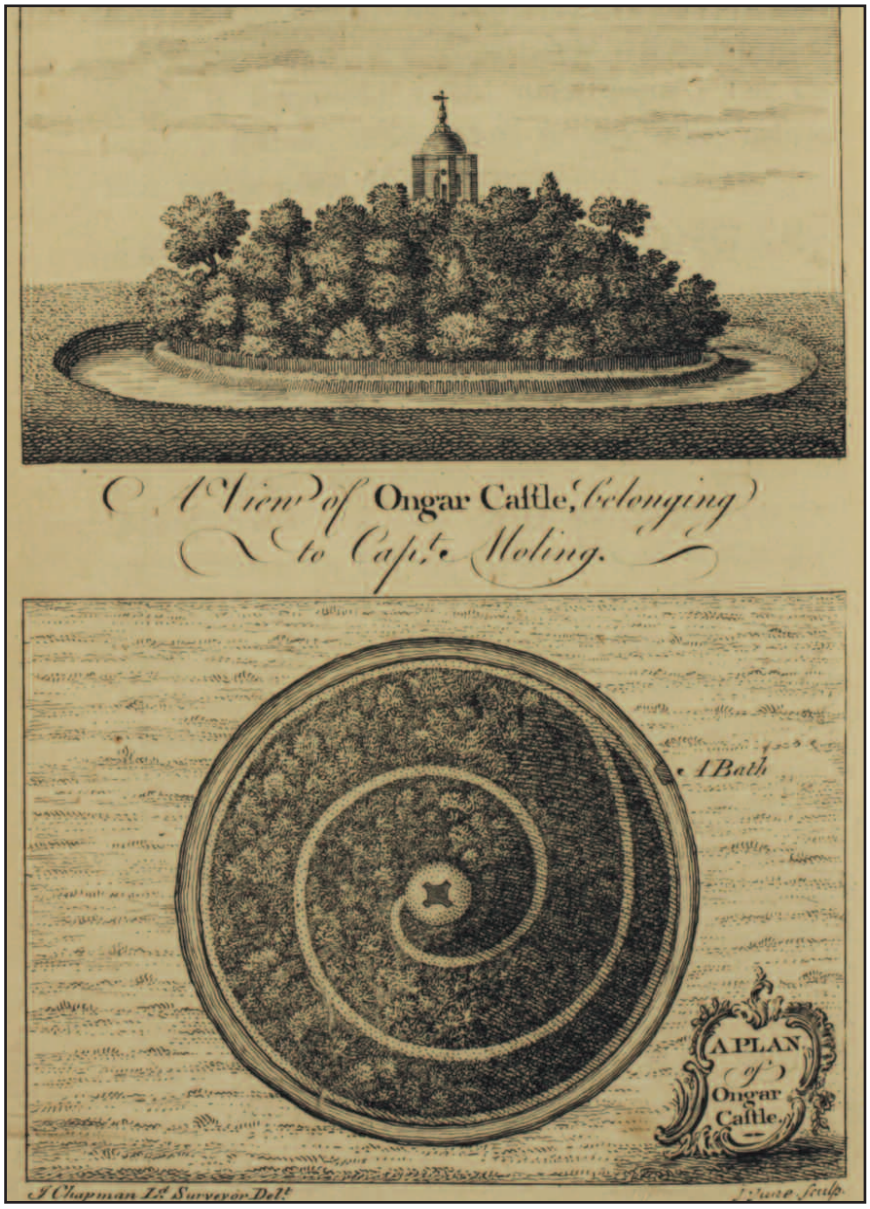
‘there would appear more than suspicion ...to swindle me’

After several more clauses making bequests to other family members and friends, there was a sixth clause which he erased a few months later in December 1835. Though the will itself was properly witnessed, the erasure was not. The seventh clause, doubtless unwelcome to his relatives, left £10,000 to Marie Appoline, also known as Pauline Louigot, ‘otherwise Mrs Johnson whom my servants and her own friends will identify’. It has been assumed that she was his mistress in Paris, and this seems to be confirmed by a letter to his brother in 1829 noting that ‘Pauline has returned from France and is awaiting my instructions in her snugbox.’[4] Her bequest was to be held in trust by his executors to prevent it from falling into unscrupulous hands.

The eighth clause directed his executors to construct, on top of the Ongar castle mound in Essex, a ‘suitable, handsome and durable monument’ in which he was to be buried (Fig 1). He further directed that the remains of his parents and his sister ‘now lying interred in a vault in the churchyard of Chipping Ongar’ should be moved to this new mausoleum, and that the sides of the castle mound should be planted with ‘cedar or cypress trees in a manner that may render it ornamental to the town’. He acknowledged that the ground ‘may not be consecrated’, and also that the castle mound did not belong to him. The difficulties - and even the legality - of fulfilling this clause were to be one of the issues in the legal challenges to this will.

The ninth clause stipulated that, after the settlement of all the previous bequests (plus whatever sums were needed for looking after his horses), his residuary estate was to pass to ‘the Government of Bengal’ to be used for ‘charitable beneficial and public works in the City of Dacca in Bengal...[for] the benefit of the native inhabitants in the manner that they and the Government may regard to be most conducive to that’.

Two months later, while staying at the Hotel Bristol in Paris, Mitford added a dated but unwitnessed codicil which cancelled his bequest for £10,000 to Mrs Margaretta MacCallum in the most vituperative terms. He stated:



1. Engraving of Ongar castle mound from the *Gentleman's History of Essex* (1770) showing a domed brick summerhouse on the summit, accessed by a spiral path. The summerhouse was probably a ruin by the time Robert Mitford made his will. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office.)

'her conduct proving most abandoned iniquitous and infamous almost if not quite beyond the power of expression Swindling once, there would appear more than suspicion of her having engaged in a conspiracy to swindle me with her Relatives Mr Lally and the woman calling herself his Wife out of the Sum of ten thousand pounds as will appear in documents & letters that will be found in my possession in the handwriting of these parties'.

Though Mrs MacCallum is not named in the amended will, it must be assumed that she was the beneficiary hidden under the heavy deletions of the sixth clause.

While on a visit to Paris in April 1836 Mitford was taken mortally ill 'with a biliary fever', and tried to alter his will again. He summoned his nephew (one of his executors) to his death bed and, the day after his arrival on 18th April, Mitford dictated three further codicils to him. His voice was failing and most of his instructions were confused and incomplete. He died two days later on 21st April, shortly before the arrival of his other executor, a London solicitor, who had also been summoned.[5]

This will was complicated by the deletion of clause six, as well as the four codicils, none of which were properly witnessed. The executors' first problem was to get the will proved. The East India Company, which had an interest as residuary legatee, was represented in at least two hearings before the Prerogative Court of Canterbury which ruled that two of the oral (nuncupative) codicils were invalid, as it was impossible to interpret Mitford's confused instructions. The written codicil revoking Mrs MacCallum's bequest, and the third oral one leaving £100 to his servant, were allowed. Probate of the will itself was delayed a further five months in order to obtain sworn witness statements confirming that the signature added to the deletion of clause six, as well as the written codicil, were in Mitford's own hand.[6]

In January 1839, in spite of the threat to annul bequests to anyone contesting the will, his widow applied to the Court of Chancery to have clauses eight and nine ruled invalid. The East India Company, as a significant beneficiary under clause nine, was again represented in what was to become a lengthy dispute. The case initially centred on clause eight and the construction of a mausoleum on the Ongar castle mound. It was claimed that, because this could not be carried out, clause nine was invalid, and that the residuary estate should be distributed amongst the beneficiaries named in the earlier clauses of the will. This argument was eventually rejected, and clause eight was allowed to stand. Counsel then challenged clause nine on the grounds that there was no suitable body to receive the bequest. Even if there was, it was not clear how the benefits could be restricted to the 'native inhabitants' of Dacca. It was

claimed that the bequest might be used inappropriately to erect 'a mosque or college for dervishes' or 'a pagan temple'. In spite of these objections, the Lord Chancellor ruled in December 1842 that the clause was 'a good charitable bequest free from legal objection' and that it should be paid to the Governor General of India. This reasonable decision was delayed by further challenges both in Chancery and in the Vice Chancellor's Court, and these were not resolved until more than five years later. Giving his final judgement in February 1848, the Vice Chancellor, Sir Lancelot Shadwell, ruled that both clauses were valid. Though normally noted for his judicial courtesy, he observed pointedly that the testator had made:

> 'a most fantastical will, and, as he said, one "against which it was his will that even the Law should not prevail"; that might be foolish enough, but you could not imagine anything so grossly absurd when in point of fact it failed. It must therefore be considered as though it had never been.'

The question of the mausoleum was not finally resolved until 1848 when the owner of Ongar castle, Sir John Swinburne, after an approach from the Master in Chancery, declined to sell the site to the executors.[7] It is not known where Mitford's body was finally laid to rest.

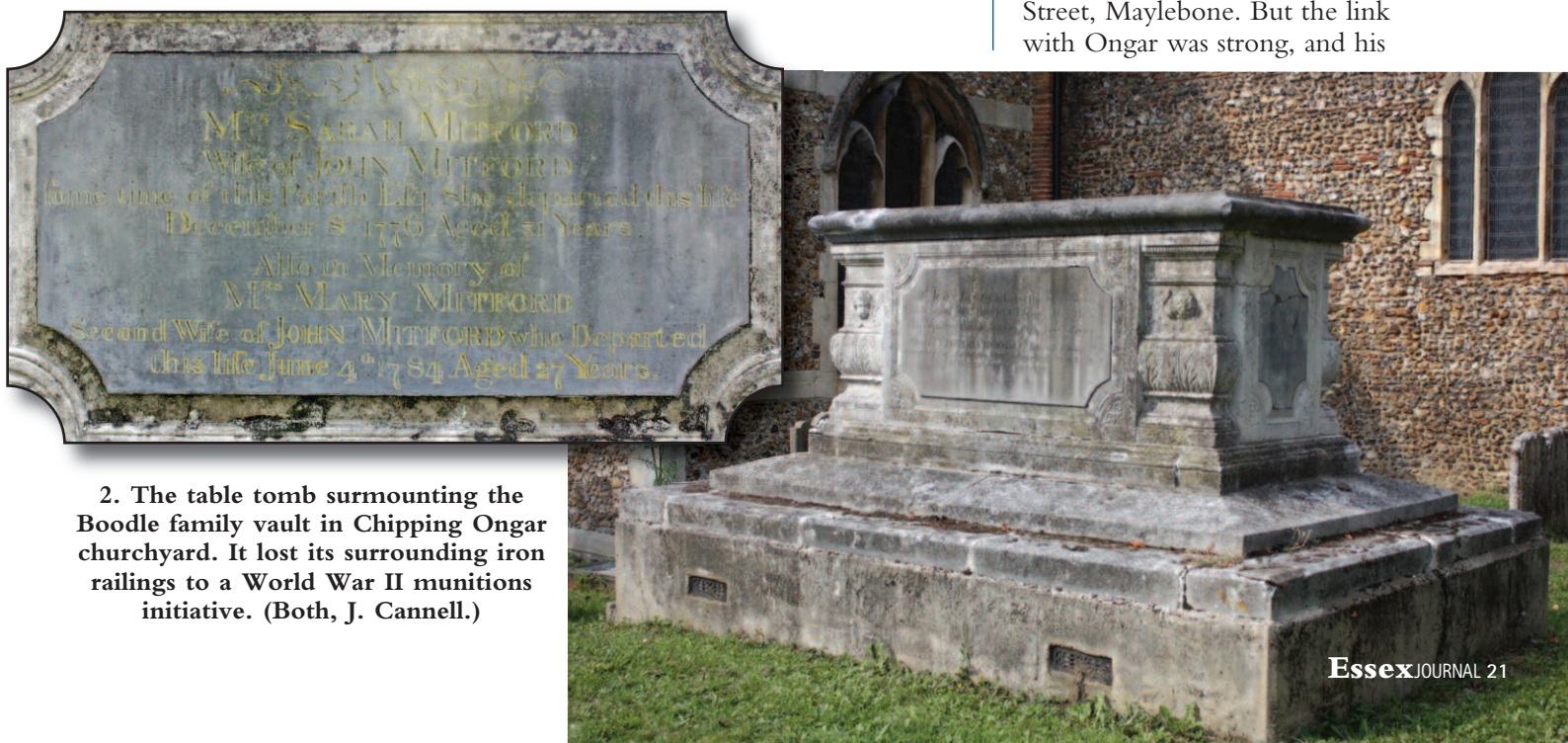
In 1844 there had been a further legal challenge in the Vice Chancellor's Court from Mitford's niece. This might have been encouraged by the aggrieved widow who, after her husband's death, had found amongst his papers a deed of settlement on the niece for 20,000 sicca rupees. This had been drawn up in 1824 when she was engaged to be married. As the marriage did not take place, the deed was returned to Mitford who had written 'cancelled' on it and added his signature. The plaintiff claimed that her trustees were entitled to receive the funds, and to hold them for her benefit. It was not until March 1848 that judgement was made against the niece, although it was noted that it had been proper to bring the case, and that her legal expenses should be paid by Mitford's estate.[8]

Finally, in the early 1850s, just under £18,000 was paid to the Governor General of India, Lord Dalhousie. After due consultation, it was decided that the bequest should be used to build a hospital in what is now Dhaka in Bangladesh. Construction started in 1854 and the hospital still bears Mitford's name.[9]

The Mitfords' connection with Chipping Ongar

The Mitfords were not an Essex family, though two generations married into the Boodle family of Chipping Ongar, whose vault in the churchyard is still surmounted by a large table tomb. Mitford's father, John senior (*c.*1738-1806) was a captain in the East India Company's fleet, wealthy enough in 1766, on his marriage to Sarah Boodle in Ongar, to describe himself as a gentleman. After Sarah's death on 8th December 1776, her body was returned to Ongar to be interred in the Boodle vault (Fig 2). One of her daughters, Sarah Frances, was also buried in the same vault after her death in 1801.[10]

John Mitford senior's connection with the town was sufficient to justify the expense of an elegant marble monument on the south wall of the chancel in memory of his first wife, Sarah (Fig 3). This came from the workshop of the fashionable sculptor, Joseph Nollekins, and is adorned with two putti, one weeping, the other decorating an urn with a garland of flowers. It describes the widower, John Mitford senior, as 'some time of this Parish' though at his marriage in 1766 he was described as of All Hallows, Lombard Street and no evidence of his residence in Ongar has been found. In 1802 he was living in Great Portland Street, Maylebone. But the link with Ongar was strong, and his



2. The table tomb surmounting the Boodle family vault in Chipping Ongar churchyard. It lost its surrounding iron railings to a World War II munitions initiative. (Both, J. Cannell.)

3. Monument to Sarah Mitford in the chancel of Chipping Ongar church, cut by the sculptor. Joseph Nollekins. The added tablet beneath records later Mitford family deaths. (J. Cannell.)

will expressed the wish to be buried in the Boodle vault.[11]

Inscribed on a separate tablet immediately below this monument are three further inscriptions. The first is to a daughter of John Mitford senior by his first marriage; she died in 1801. Below this, two further inscriptions were added to commemorate his second wife, and John Mitford himself. The lettering is compressed to fit the remaining space, and was probably cut some years later.

The Boodle/Mitford link was further strengthened in 1814 by the marriage of the son of John Mitford senior (also named John) to the daughter of another Boodle related to the Ongar family.[12]

John Mitford senior's second marriage

After his first wife's death, John Mitford senior married Mary (née Allen) by whom he had two sons, John (1781-1859) and Robert (1784-1836), the latter being the subject of this article. She died on 4th June 1784, soon after the birth of her second son. Though unrelated to the family, she too was interred in the Boodle vault in Ongar. Nothing is known about the upbringing of her two orphaned boys. Their father did not remarry and, at the age of 46, was doubtless still working as a ship's captain for the East India Company. It seems probable that the Boodle relatives in Ongar reared the two orphans; this would explain Robert's knowledge of the castle mound, and his wish to be buried there. The mound had been landscaped before Robert's birth with trees and shrubs, and a spiral path had been constructed to the summit, which was surmounted by a domed brick tower.[13]

In 1792 both boys were sent as boarders to what was then known as Tunbridge grammar school in Kent but in 1799 their ways parted.[14] John, the older brother, preceded to Oriel College, Oxford, took holy orders and in 1810 obtained -

through an influential relative, Lord Redesdale a comfortable living in Benhall, Suffolk, where he rebuilt the rectory and laid out the grounds. Within a few years he acquired two other Suffolk livings. However, according to a contemporary, he 'had never been intended by Nature for the Church...and the life before him was utterly uncongenial to his tastes and habits.' He spent much of his time in lodgings in London, leading an active social and cultural life and developing a successful literary career. This included the editorship of the *Gentleman's Magazine* between 1834 and 1850. He also amassed a collection of books and *objets d'art,* sold after his death for a little over £4,000. It is reasonable to wonder if his passion for collecting outstripped his income, and led him to misspend his brother's gift. Certainly his conscience was not easy at the end of his life; according to a friend who tried to console him on his deathbed, 'his one haunting thought was the terrible chance that, for the sins which he had committed in this world, he would be punished according to their magnitude in the next'.[15] Was this simply an overactive Christian conscience, or had he really been guilty of serious misdemeanours?

Robert Mitford's career

In contrast, the younger brother, Robert, left school in 1799 at the age of 15 and was sent to India for what he described in his will - with perhaps a hint of resentment - as 'a long and arduous course of service'. He filled a series of posts in Bengal, ending his career as second judge in the Court of Appeal in Dacca. He appears to have been a contentious employee. In 1815 he was suspended for many months from his work as a revenue collector for 'acts of undue severity'. Four years later he was involved in a dispute with a judge in Shahabad. This came before the Court of Directors in London and resulted in the demotion of the judge, although the counter charges against Mitford were held to be 'partly justified'. In 1827, by then a judge himself, he had another dispute with one of his colleagues in Dacca. In November 1828 he returned to England on 'absentee allowance' and by May 1831 had retired on an annuity.[16] Though he maintained a London address, he appears to have spent much of his time in Paris.

Letters written by Robert to his brother between 1804 and 1829 show that John was frequently short of money or in debt, and that Robert bailed him out with many small payments, as well as a gift or loan of £6,000. The letters also show that Robert intended his nephew to be his heir, and promised financial assistance to see him through university. All these offers of help seem to have been made with unstinting generosity, though the possibility that John only kept letters that were favourable to his case cannot be overlooked, particularly as those now in the National Archive were used in his defence in the 1831 court case. Some of Robert's letters express surprise that John was unable to manage without extra assistance on the income from his patrimony and his Suffolk livings, which totalled (on his calculation) about £1,000 per annum. Relations between the two brothers were still amicable in November 1829, the date of the last surviving letter.[17]

Serious disagreements had come to a head by 1831when a bill was filed in the Rolls Court on behalf of John's 'infant' son (then aged nearly 16). The purpose of the bill was to request the court to appoint a 'proper person' to superintend what was left of a gift of £6,000, intended for the maintenance and education of the 'infant' plaintiff. In language that can only have been Robert's, the bill claimed that much of the money had been already spent 'for his (brother's) private purposes' and 'to the gratification of his own immoral propensities'. The Master of the Rolls, in dismissing the bill, ruled that, though there might have been an abuse of trust, a gift or loan to the father could not be regarded as the son's property. He also observed that the allegations in the bill were 'scandalous and impertinent'.[18]

Conclusion

There can be little doubt that Robert Mitford was not an easy man, prone to stormy disagreements with family, friends and professional colleagues. Two disputes with members of the judiciary in Bengal were serious enough to be referred to the India Office in London, and a separate disciplinary matter led to his suspension on full pay for many months. His marriage was unhappy and childless, and ended with a deed of separation in 1835. Though he appears to have been remarkably tolerant of his brother's repeated requests for financial help over two decades, it is not clear whether the payments were intended as gifts or loans. Robert's tolerance came to an end in 1831 when there was a violent disagreement over what he saw as his brother's abuse of his financial support. Judging by the intemperate language used in the bill, Robert was responsible for the consequent legal challenge to his brother.

His last will and testament written in 1835 expressed in similarly intemperate terms his unforgiving antipathy to his brother. Considering his legal experience in the courts of Bengal, his attempt to put his will beyond legal challenge, as well as his failure to have the alterations and additions properly witnessed, is surprising.

Was he simply a man of violent emotions, aggravated by envy of his older brother's comfortable life as a country parson, collector and bibliophile, and resentful of the repeated subsidies needed to maintain this lifestyle? On the contrary, the surviving letters suggest that

he was very supportive of his brother, and more than willing to respond to his frequent requests for money over the best part of two decades. It was not until the late 1820s that his letters show serious concern about his brother's failure to live within his income. Matters came to a head in 1831 when he believed that money intended for his nephew's education was being misspent. This may have been a particularly sensitive point, as Robert regarded his nephew as his heir, and had been concerned for some time about his lack of progress at school. Four years later his 'fantastical' will shows that he was still deeply embittered by his brother's behaviour. The reason for the row is understandable but why did it cause such a deep and irreconcilable rift between the two men? Is it possible that a chronic illness – not unusual in those who had served in India – had exacerbated his quarrelsome nature and seriously impaired his judgement, or had his brother crossed some moral boundary that he was unable to forgive? Unless further letters or a diary come to light, it is unlikely that we shall ever know.

References

1. The National Archives (TNA), PROB 11/1886/403, will of Robert Mitford, 25/11/1837.
2. Elizabeth Anne Pattle (1779-1859) whom he married in Marshadebad on 30th June 1804. She suffered from poor health, necessitating several return visits to England. Cambridge University Library (CUL), MS Add 8910, letters from Robert Mitford to his brother, 1/6/1804, 4/5/1813, 18/8/1820, 15/8/1823 & 7/3/1828. The sicca rupee was the official currency in Bengal until 1836; it weighed slightly more than the East India Company's rupee, and was nominally valued at two shillings.
3. It is difficult to understand the basis of this accusation. His brother was married on 21st October 1814, and his only son, Robert Henry, was born nine months later on 24th July 1815. W.P. Courtney, rev. J.E. Barcus, 'Mitford, John (1781-1859) in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, http://oxforddnb.com.view/article/18856, (04/08/14).
4. See, for example, the Banglapedia entry for Robert Mitford at www.banglapedia.org/HT/M_0331.htm, (25/07/14); CUL, MS Add 8910, letter from Robert Mitford to his brother, 29/9/1829.
5. Information about the death bed scene in Paris is drawn from the report of the Probate Court of Canterbury (PCC) enquiry into the validity of the codicils. *The Times*, legal report, 21/04/1837, p.7.
6. *The Times*, legal reports, 21/04/1837, p.7 & 03/06/1837, p.5. The PCC granted probate on 16/11/1837, TNA, PROB 11/1886/403.
7. *The Times*, legal reports, 19/11/1841, p.6; 09/12/1842, p.6; 20/12/1842, p. 6; 18/02/1848, p.7; 25/02/1848, p.7; R. Ibbetson Porter, *A few Notes on the Town and Parish of Chipping Ongar* (Ongar, 1877), p.3. In 1842 the Lord Chancellor had instructed the Master in Chancery to establish the cost of acquiring the castle mound, landscaping it and constructing a suitable mausoleum. This was estimated to be £1,269.
8. *The Times*, legal reports, 23/04/1844, p.7; 13/03/1848, p.7.
9. www.banglapedia.org/HT/M_0331.htm, (25/07/2014).
10. Essex Record Office (ERO), D/P 124/1/1 Chipping Ongar parish register (marriage of John Mitford & Sarah Boodle, 29/05/1766; burial of Sarah Mitford 13/12/1776; burial of Mary Mitford 11/06/1784; burial of Sarah France Mitford 01/07/1801): J. Bettley & N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Essex* (New Haven & London, 2007), p.233.
11. W.G.Hart (ed), *The Register of Tonbridge School 1553-1820* (London, 1935) p.188; TNA PROB11/1445/3, will of John Mitford, 02/06/1806.
12. John Mitford junior married, at St George's, Hanover Square, Augusta, second daughter of Edward Boodle (21/10/1814) who was the youngest son of John Boodle senior of Ongar. Hart, p.139.
13. Anon, *History of Essex by a Gentleman*, iii (Chelmsford, 1770), pp.314-6.
14. Hart, p.188. Though there is no printed entry for Robert Mitford in the register, the copy in Tonbridge School library contains a handwritten biographical note about him supplied by Lt Col B. Rogers, MD. There is also additional handwritten information about his brother John.
15. J. Foster, ed, *Index Ecclesiasticus* (Cambridge, 1890), p.122; W.P. Courtney, rev. J.E. Barcus, 'Mitford, John (1781-1859)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, http://oxforddnb.com.view/article/18856, (04/08/14); M.C.Houstoun, *Woman's Memories of World-Known Men* (London, 1883), pp.123, 178, 201.
16. TNA, J 90/599, Robert Mitford's letters to his brother, 14/11/1815, 05/04/1816 & 03/10/1816; British Library, IOR/F/4/568/13982 & 569/13983-4 & 1305/51784. Brief details of his career are found in E. Dodwell, ed, *Alphabetical List of The Honourable East India Company's Bengal Civil Service* (London, 1839), pp.332-3.
17. About 40 of Robert's letters (some incomplete) have survived, mostly written from India. Those at TNA were deposited by order of the court after the conclusion of the Mitford v Mitford case of 1831. TNA, J 90/599; CUL, MS Add 8910.
18. *The Times*, legal report, 24/01/1831, p.4; TNA, J 90/599, letters from Robert Mitford to John Mitford.

Acknowledgements

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The Great War Hospitals of Southend

by

Ken Crowe

As the war clouds were looming in 1914 it was realized that there would be an urgent need for a vastly increased provision of hospitals, both at home and abroad to deal with the expected casualties. The existing Military hospitals, mostly in garrisons, would be expanded, and many civil hospitals would assign a number of beds, or whole wards, to military use. At the outbreak of war a very large number of other properties were offered and taken over for hospital use. These ranged from public buildings, such as school and village halls to hotels and private houses.

In 1909, at the instigation of the War Office, Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs) had been formed in each county, principally formed of British Red Cross Society and St John Ambulance Brigade members (Fig 1).[1] When war broke out in 1914 the Detachments worked together under the umbrella of the Red Cross (and governed by the Joint War Committee), while each Detachment retained its own identity. There were male detachments, normally responsible for transport and orderly work, while the female detachments assisted nursing staff in the hospitals (both at home and abroad, although we shall be looking only at those in the Southend area) and provided refreshments at rest stations. By early 1915 there were in Essex 54 women's detachments (1,676 members) and 21 men's detachments (738 members).[2]

The VADs established voluntary (i.e. auxiliary) hospitals in the various public and private properties offered to the Red Cross. Once the properties had been inspected and declared suitable, the Detachments were responsible for raising the necessary funds (through subscriptions and donations) for equipping and maintaining the hospitals, a committee being formed for each VAD hospital for this purpose. It is very unlikely, however, that the smaller hospitals ever approached the ideal regarding facilities as laid down in the standard guides for VADs.[3]

The hospitals were arranged in a hierarchy for administrative – and medical – purposes. Military hospitals took the most serious casualties direct from ambulance train convoys, and they then distributed (i.e. directed the less

1. Men from St John Ambulance (Essex VAD 45) acted as Orderlies in Queen Mary's RN Hospital. (Reproduced by kind permission of Allan Davies, Unit Manager, St John Ambulance, Southend.)

serious) patients to the various auxiliary war hospitals that were affiliated to them. The auxiliary hospitals were originally assigned the status of 'A' and 'B', the latter being for convalescing servicemen.[4] Very soon, however, the larger and better equipped Auxiliary hospitals also took casualties direct from convoys, and were known as Primary or 'P' hospitals (Fig 2). In the county there were recorded a total of 23 'A' class Auxiliary hospitals and 10 'B', although this list is not complete.[5]

Southampton and Dover were the main disembarkation ports for casualties from the Western Front. The Director of Medical Services received notification of the arrival of hospital ships and the number of casualties to be landed. He received, on a daily basis, information from each main hospital in the country regarding how many beds were available in each hospital, both military and auxiliary.[6] Later in the war other disembarkation ports were opened in Britain, including Portsmouth, Folkestone, Liverpool, London, Glasgow, Tilbury, Boston, Hull, Leith, and Newcastle.[7] While some patients were landed at Southend Pier,[8] the vast majority were transferred from hospital ships at the ports to ambulance trains for their onward journey to hospital.

Receiving rail stations in Essex were Brentwood, Chelmsford, Clacton, Colchester, Saffron Walden, Southend and Stratford. There were also 'Rest Stations' at Kelvedon and Witham, where Red Cross VADs would distribute hot drinks and sandwiches to the casualties in the ambulance trains.[9]

On arrival at Southend (Southend Central – Midland; or Southend Victoria – Great Eastern Railway), the ambulance train was met by medical staff and by orderlies from the local Voluntary Aid Detachments, whose work is discussed later.

The Great War Hospitals of Southend

There was a total of six hospitals in the Borough of Southend in the Great War (Fig 3). One of these, the Victoria Hospital, was a civil hospital that had opened (in Warrior Square) in the late nineteenth century. Shoebury Garrison (military) Hospital had been opened in the mid-nineteenth century. The other four 'war hospitals' were converted from other buildings – two hotels, a holiday (children's) home and a recently completed convalescent home.

Very little is known about Shoebury Garrison hospital, few relevant records having survived. It may have taken the most serious cases direct from ambulance trains, but the relationship (if any) between the Garrison hospital and the local Auxiliary hospitals is entirely unknown.

On 6th August 1914 a War Office telegram was issued instructing all military hospitals to be expanded to their fullest extent and, by mid-October the Shoebury Garrison Theatre had been fitted out for hospital use, and by the end of the month the Long Course Officers' quarters were also being equipped for use as a hospital. This was in addition to the Barrack Hospital, built in 1856. In May 1916 further expansion of the facilities took place, possibly in anticipation of the forthcoming Somme offensive. And this is as far the surviving records can take us.[10]

Immediately following the outbreak of war the Palace Hotel, on Southend's Pier Hill, was identified as a potential hospital. Whether the building had been offered by its owner (Alfred Tolhurst) to the Red Cross[11] or whether the owner had been approached by the Admiralty, is not clear. On 8th August Fleet Surgeon Munday inspected the building, declaring it suitable for a naval war hospital. Twelve people were found to form a committee, which met for the first time on 10th August 1914, Dr William Hale White, from Guys Hospital (later Sir William Hale-White) being chairman. Her Majesty, Queen Mary, consented to become president of the hospital which took the name Queen Mary's Royal Naval Hospital. The Committee's first secretary was R.A. Corbett, followed by E.R. Homfray.

The hotel was acquired rent-free, the Committee paying all taxes and insurances (and at the end of the tenancy, in July 1919, paying the owners £6,000 in reparation).[12] Following an appeal in the name of HM the Queen for funds to adapt and equip the Hotel for hospital use, a total of about £21,000 was raised. This, at least, enabled the agreement with the owners to be signed for the occupancy of the building, beginning on 21st September 1914. A few days earlier Alfred Tolhurst's son, Bernard, had donated £1,000 to the hospital.[13]

Meanwhile the Essex 34 Voluntary Aid Detachment took over the Glen Holiday Home in Southchurch Road, for use as an auxiliary (Red Cross) hospital.[14] The Glen, also known as St Saviour's Poplar Retreat, was a children's holiday home before the war. All the cleaning and other work needed to make the building fit for hospital use was achieved by the ladies of the detachment.[15] The building was ready for the first casualties in October 1914, initially with 50 beds in 12 wards. The commandant was Dr W.E. Baker of Thorpe Bay, the Medical Officer being Dr T.B Sellors, in the local medical practice of Sellors and Powers, Genesta Road, Westcliff-on-Sea.[16]

The members of Essex 34 VAD were soon accumulating stores, garments and other materials in readiness for a new hospital in the town,[17] as it became obvious that the Glen was not going to be large enough. In January 1915 they took over and converted the Overcliff Hotel (Fig 4) which, at that time was to let and probably vacant, initially accommodating 75 beds.

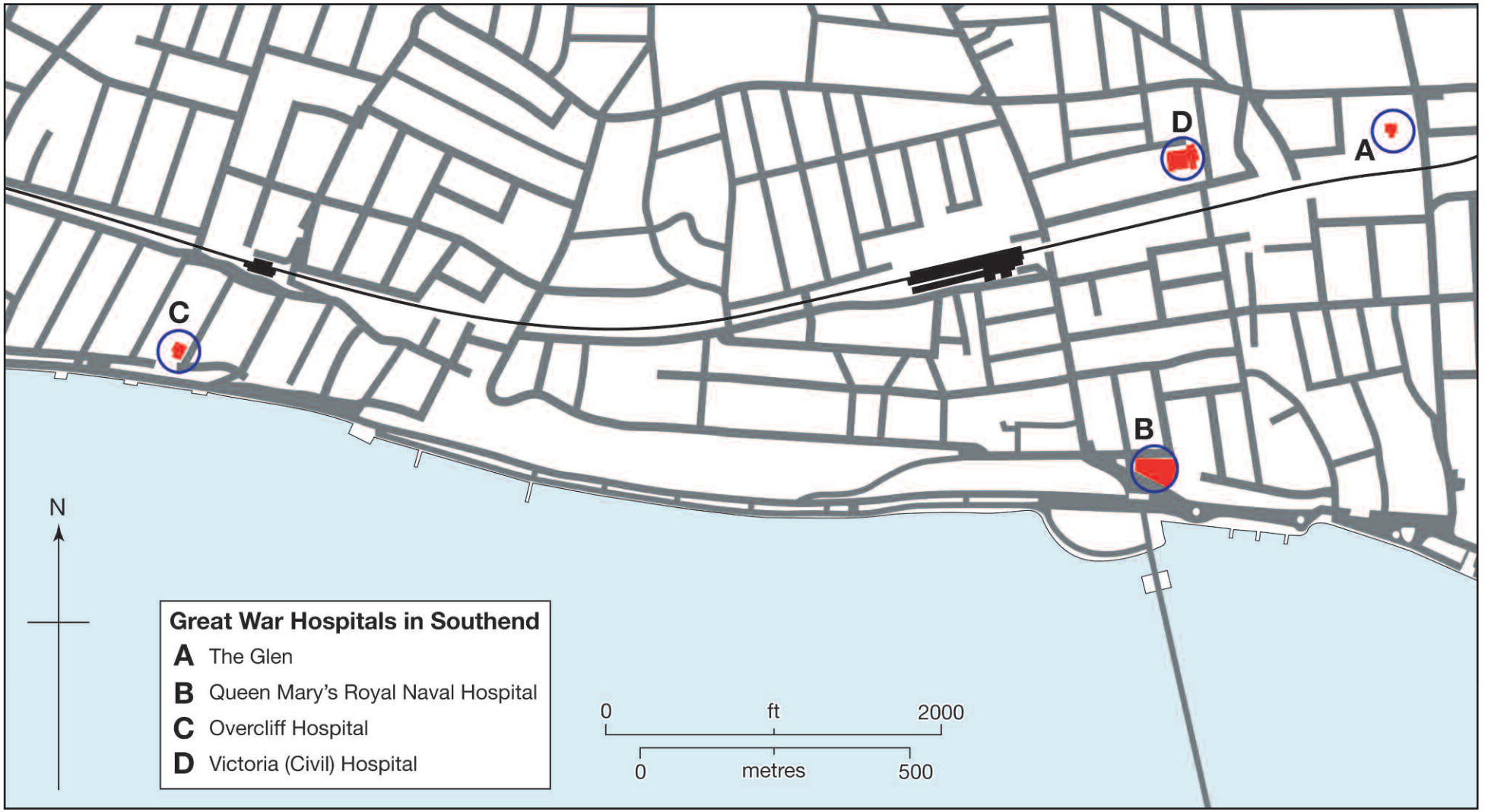
2. The majority of Great War auxiliary hospitals in Essex were affiliated to the Central Military Hospital at Colchester. (Map, C. D'Alton.)

A much smaller property, the Hamilton Convalescent Home on Thorpe Bay seafront (Frances Wassell listed as Matron, Mrs Hamilton, owner), was taken over, with accommodation for eight patients.[18] Presumably this property remained a convalescent home for recuperating servicemen during the war.

Staffing

Each of the Auxiliary Hospitals was under the control of a Commandant, who was responsible to the County Director (Red Cross) for the building, equipment and supplies and the hospital finances. The Medical Officer was in overall control of medical and surgical matters, while the Matron was responsible to the Medical Officer for the nursing staff (both professional nurses and the VADs) and the management of the patients. The Quartermaster was responsible for the security of the patients' kits and also for issuing and accounting for equipment and supplies.[19] A major role was played in all of the hospitals by doctors from local medical practices, including those working in the town's Victoria Hospital (Warrior Square).

The majority of the nursing staff in Queen Mary's Royal Naval Hospital were trained nurses (13 trained at Guys and four from other hospitals[20]); they were under the supervision of the lady superintendent (Lady Maud Wilbraham) and the Matron, Ellen Kate Finnemore. Kate Finnemore had also been trained at Guys, gaining her nursing certificate in 1900.[21] She had been a matron in a military hospital in South Africa in 1901 and, following her work at Southend, was awarded the Royal Red Cross medal (first class), 'in recognition of her valuable work in connection with the war.'[22] On alternate nights assistance was rendered by nurses of the 116th Essex VAD (St John). A total of about 30 VAD nurses helped at Queen Mary's, 15 of them working throughout the whole war.[23] One of the VAD members was Elizabeth Ingram from Southend; she joined as a VAD nurse in June 1917, working until the hospital was demobilized in May 1919, notching up a total of 1,234 hours.[24]



3. Southend's auxiliary hospitals, including Queen Mary's RN Hospital, were affiliated to Chatham. (Map, C. D'Alton.)

The consultants at Queen Mary's were all Guys men, resident doctors coming from Southend's Victoria Hospital (Warrior Square) and other medical practices in the town. Dr William Hale White, chairman of the Hospital Committee was also visiting consultant and Commandant. The senior resident Medical Officer was R.H. Chisholm, soon replaced by Evelyn Scott (House Physician at Guys Hospital, 1915[25]), with Ronald Sells as Junior Medical Officer.[26] The Orderlies were from Voluntary Aid Detachment 45 (Commandant H.L. Jones), assisted by VAD 43 (Fig 1).

Queen Mary's RN Hospital, at its fullest extent of 350 beds, was divided into 11 wards; on the ground floor Mary ward with 50 beds, staffed by three sisters, three nurses and one male nurse; George Ward with 50 beds, two sisters, three nurses and one male nurse and Kitchener Ward with 20 beds, one sister and two nurses. On the first floor were seven wards: France (one sister, one nurse), Albert (one sister, three nurses), Elizabeth (three sisters, four nurses), Serbia (one sister, one nurse), Newfoundland (one sister, one nurse), Japan (one sister, two nurses), Edward and Russia Ward (three sisters, four nurses).[27]

At the Glen Red Cross hospital the staff included the matron, Mrs Wakeling, soon replaced by Mrs Swan, and six trained nurses, a masseuse, paid cook and kitchen maids and 21 VADs.[28] Four of the VAD nurses worked for the full 4½ years of the war, others working for between three and four years.[29] The house surgeons at the Glen were Drs.T.B. Sellors (the first medial officer in charge of the hospital, who later resigned to take up duties in France), R.H. Powers, H.E. Simpson and the Commandant himself, all local doctors. In December 1916 the hospital was expanded, with new ward accommodation and new x-ray equipment and, in July 1917 an annex was opened (in Southchurch Road), providing a total of 116 beds.

The Overcliff Hospital, occupying a vacant hotel overlooking The Leas at Westcliff, was occupied from January 1915. The Commandant and Medical Officer was Dr Thomas Brice Poole. Mrs Earle was matron until February 1918 when she resigned, being replaced in that position by the long-serving nurse at the hospital, Mrs Henderson. Records of the exact number of trained nurses and VADs working at the Overcliff at any specific time have not survived, but the British Red Cross Society's Hospital Card for the Overcliff lists a total of 22 nurses (some of these probably VADs) over the period from September 1915 to January 1919. Even this list is not complete, the names of two known VADs, Effie May Oliphant and Mrs Nelson Keys being absent.

Like the majority of VADs, E.M. Oliphant was from a prosperous local family, and could afford to give up her time freely; she had to wait until 1915 before she could begin training, joining her local VAD (34) and going to Red Cross and Home Nursing lectures. In January 1916 she passed her nursing examination and in March she was asked to join the nursing staff at the Overcliff.[30] In fact she worked in the 'still room' at the Overcliff Hospital on a part-time basis, from August 1916 until January 1919, a total of 430 hours.[31]

VAD members working in military and naval hospitals were paid at a rate of £20 a year and were expected to sign a six month contract. VADs in auxiliary hospitals normally received expenses only, most of them living locally. There was much discussion in the Red Cross about the difference in treatment between VADs working in military and in auxiliary hospitals, some seeing it as unfair. Dr Brice Poole of the Overcliff Hospital stated that several VAD nurses at his hospital would be unable to continue without some remuneration.[32] Mrs Mitchell (chair of the Glen Hospital Committee) raised the question (in June 1917) of two of her VAD staff, one a cook and the other a nurse, who were being paid, and therefore, she asked, could they continue to be regarded as VAD members? Dr Poole proposed that, in order to overcome this problem, he be allowed to form a Benevolent Fund, from which his VAD nurses could be paid, which was agreed.[33]

Regarding the payment of doctors in Auxiliary Hospitals, the War Office agreed to remuneration based on a sum of 4d per patient per day (for category 'P' hospitals) and 3d (for Category 'A') to a maximum payment of 17s 6d and 12s 6d respectively.[34] The visiting doctors at Queen Mary's Royal Naval Hospital (through Charles Forsyth[35]) had asked for a payment of £100 annually for each member of the medical staff, but was forced to accept the War Office offer, which was regarded, he wrote, as an 'honorarium, and can scarcely be held to be in any sense payment for the work we are doing.'[36]

The annual accounts of the VAD hospitals, and those of Queen Mary's Royal Naval Hospital, show that in no year did grants cover the running costs of the hospitals.

Funding of the Hospitals

Each auxiliary hospital received a capitation grant from the War Office which, at the outbreak of war, was two shillings per bed per day, rising to 3s 6d by December 1918. Unoccupied beds were allowed a reduced grant of 6d per day.[37] Grants were also provided by the Ministry of Pensions for soldiers and sailors who had been discharged and who were attending Auxiliary Hospitals as out-patients. Small grants were provided by the Red Cross, such as the payment of rent for the Recreation Room at the Overcliff[38] and the contribution towards the cost of the Glen

4. The Overcliff Hotel, Westcliff, was converted to hospital use by members of Essex VAD 34 (Red Cross) in January 1915. (Reproduced by kind permission of Terry Rayson.)

extension. However, the running costs of the hospitals was always more than income from these official sources (which was never meant to cover the full cost; at the Glen it was calculated that the cost of running the hospital was 9d per man per day more than they received from grants[39]); the Auxiliary Hospitals were expected to raise the difference locally, through a variety of means.

With so many charitable bodies raising so much money for the hospitals and other causes in support of the war effort, concern was raised regarding the potential for fraud. The County Director of the Red Cross had instructed that the Glen be administered by a separate committee from the Overcliff 'to prevent overlapping and the possibility of fraudulent collectors,'[40] and a separate Voluntary Aid Detachment (Essex 28) was established to run the hospital. The following year the *War Charities Act* (1916) was passed, requiring each charitable body that appealed directly to the public for funds to be registered, local authorities (e.g. Southend Borough Council) administering the Act.

There were ten charities in Southend registered under the Act, including Queen Mary's Royal Naval Hospital, coming under the terms of the Act presumably because its committee made appeals directly to the public through its annual Gift Days and Splint Fund. Other registered charities included the Southend Hospital Supply Depot, the Thorpe Bay Ladies' Hospital Aid Committee, the Southend County Borough Needlework Guild and, of particular relevance to our theme, the Overcliff Hospital Food Fund and the Southend-on-Sea Charity Entertainments Committee.[41] Although the Glen and Overcliff Hospitals both announced that they would apply for registration under the Act, neither appears in the Register.[42]

While some properties had been given to the War Office or Red Cross with funding by their donors, most hospitals needed a list of local subscribers who would provide the funding necessary for the establishment of the hospital. As we have seen, subscribers to the Queen Mary's Royal Naval Hospital had raised a total of £21,000 by September 1914, (total subscriptions eventually amounted to almost £34,000[43]). The Red Cross central stores (Chelmsford) together with the local War Hospital Supply Depot (Hamlet Court Road, Westcliff) provided much of the equipment and bedding required, while local support groups and 'working parties', such as the Southend County Needlework Guild, manufactured sheets and pillows, the Leigh Branch contributing towels, pillow-slips and other bed linen.[44] Local schools helped also, the boys of Southend High making splints and, in 1917, the girls of Southend High gave a concert in order to raise funds to help the Naval hospital buy new x-ray equipment.[45] Competitions and an 'ABC' sale were also organized for the same purpose.[46]

Queen Mary's Royal Naval Hospital benefited from the patronage of HM Queen Mary herself, who contributed generously to each of the annual Gift Days organized for that hospital. The Gift Day held in July 1918 will serve as a fairly typical example. Queen Mary gave £100, the amount from all other donors amounting to £377. Sales of souvenirs including postcards brought in about £420, while street and other collections brought in about £350.[47] Annual appeals raised sums from £500 (1915) to almost £2,500 (1918). The Gift Day also brought in large quantities of provisions for the hospital including, for example, eggs, sugar, tea, chickens, flour, bacon, together with cigarettes, tobacco and matches.[48] The annual Gift Days were also the opportunity to attract more subscribers.[49]

Fundraising for X-ray apparatus will provide a typical example of the various strategies employed to fund a specific objective, while also introducing the principal players in fund raising in the Borough. In April 1916 Mrs Hazel Nelson Keys organized an 'All-Star Matinee' at the Hippodrome theatre (Southchurch Road) in aid of the Overcliff Hospital, the proceeds of which (about £200) helped towards the cost of new X-ray apparatus at the hospital.[50] Mrs Nelson Keys, of Westcliff, was a VAD nurse at the Overcliff hospital from the outbreak of war, and throughout the war organized many charity events, including Flag Days in aid of

the hospital and other causes. She also sold programmes and worked in the War Supply Depot. The nurses and patients of the Overcliff presented her with a silver mug in recognition of her charity work.[51]

In December 1916 the new extension and ward (for 12 patients), which included a new X-ray machine was opened at the Glen Red Cross hospital at a cost of £375. Despite a contribution from the Red Cross of £100 'considering the excellent work carried out by the hospital,'[52] the latter was now in considerable debt, to help alleviate which a charity concert was held in the Cannon Street Hotel (London). Proceeds were to be divided between the City of London Red Cross Hospital and the Glen. A charity fair at the Kursaal was also held (£150 to the Glen) followed by a special concert at the Hippodrome, organized by Mrs Frank Allen.[53] Mrs Allen had organized the first war fund entertainment in the Borough and, with her husband had organized flag days in aid of blinded soldiers and sailors at St Dunstan's, Regents Park; she also helped to establish the Thorpe Bay working party of the Red Cross Society.

Fund-raising concerts in aid of all three auxiliary hospitals were held fairly regularly, principally at the Hippodrome Theatre. Many of these were organized by the Southend-on-Sea Charity Entertainment Committee (a registered War Charity), through its secretary, Fred Donnithorne (a local baker and tireless supporter of war charities.)

Each October throughout the war the annual Red Cross 'Our Day' collection was held. These nation-wide flag days were supplemented by local Red Cross collections, permission for which had to be obtained from the local authority, a permission that was by no means automatically given, and sometimes refused.

Another charity registered under the War Charities Act was the Overcliff Food Fund, which received donations in money and kind for the wounded soldiers in that hospital. A lengthy account in the local press[54] described the weekly contributions of groceries, vegetables and other foods, which were all meticulously accounted for by the store-keeper, Miss Pritchard. In February 1917 Fred Donnithorne organized a concert in aid of the Food Fund;[55] in fact, so well supplied was the hospital that the Red Cross Food Inspector's report criticized the management of the hospital for what appeared to be too liberal a diet.[56] This must be seen against the background of increasing food shortages and rising prices, a concern which led to the appointment of a Director of Food Economy at Auxiliary Hospitals in December 1917.[57]

Transport and Orderlies

The three men's VADs in the Borough, Essex 47 (Red Cross, based at Leigh), Essex 45 and 43 (both St John in Southend) were responsible for transporting the wounded from ambulance trains to hospital[58] and for providing orderlies in the three auxiliary hospitals. This was apart from their First Aid work (most notably during the air raids of 1915 and 1917) and any day jobs they held.

Members of VAD Essex 45 and 43 provided the orderlies for Queen Mary's RN Hospital. They were each required to undertake one of five shifts at the hospital, varying from seven hours (7 pm to 2 am) to four hours (e.g. 11 pm to 3 am), and each man was expected to undertake at least 20 hours of duty per month.[59] In 1917 the average number of members undertaking orderly duty was 50 each month,[60] rising from 22 in 1915.

The women's detachment, Essex 34 VAD (Red Cross, the Overcliff Hospital) had two lady ambulance drivers, Mrs Walker and Miss Rene Holloway. Essex 47, men's Red Cross detachment, had been formed at Leigh in February 1915, to undertake orderly work at the Glen and Overcliff hospitals and the transportation of casualties. Working in conjunction with the military hospital, Essex 47 transported casualties landed at the Pier head from Chatham to the local hospitals and, together with drivers from Essex 34, also collected casualties direct from the military hospital at Chatham.

Members of the St John Ambulance detachments (45 & 43) worked under their commandant, H.L. Jones, who was Acting Transport Manager for Southend.[61] In April 1918 the National Sporting Club presented three ambulances to the Southend section of the Essex Motor Volunteers[62] while a few days later the Mayor of Southend received, on behalf of St John Ambulance (Essex 45), a new ambulance provided by public subscription.[63]

Other vehicles had been requisitioned from local firms, such as Luker's Brewery, whose delivery vans were modified for ambulance work. Private cars for transporting patients were provided by members of both the Southend branch of the Essex Motor Volunteers and the Southend Auto Club; these volunteers also provided the transport for taking convalescing patients for outings to local country houses in the summer.

The Patients

Queen Mary's RN hospital was originally established as a Naval auxiliary hospital; however for the first year of the war it received soldiers only (the limited numbers of naval casualties being accommodated elsewhere), and was affiliated to Chatham military hospital.[64] On 5th October 1914 urgent instructions were sent to the hospital to prepare for the reception of 168 Belgians wounded in the fighting around Liege, Namur and Antwerp.[65] The Belgians arrived in Southend on October 16th, having been hurriedly removed from hospitals in Antwerp.[66] Throughout the

previous night members of the Church Lads' Brigade had fitted up beds and ladies of the local Needlework Guilds had supplied sheets, pillows, etc. The first convoy of ambulance trains arrived at the Great Eastern Railway station at 2 am, members of the Southend and District Automobile club providing transport between the station and the hospital. Once the news of the arrival of the trains had reached the wider public, thousands of residents lined the streets.[67] On the following days crowds were to be seen on Pier Hill, ready to offer gifts of chocolates, sweets, cigarettes and money to the Belgian casualties, in return for which souvenirs in the form of uniform buttons, coins and messages were exchanged.[68] This created such a distraction that the hospital authorities tried to discourage the practice.[69]

By the beginning of November Belgian wounded were also being received at the Glen and by mid-February the following year the Overcliff was treating 75 Belgian and British casualties.[70] A picture of the crowded conditions at the hospitals during this emergency is provided by Miss Helene Hinkley, who was a nurse with the Essex 34 VAD: 'The hospitals were crowded, so the walking wounded Belgian and Flemish soldiers were placed with some of the nursing personnel, thus enabling Hospital beds to be made available for the next batch of wounded.'[71]

The first British casualties arrived at Queen Mary's RN Hospital direct from Plymouth in early November 1914, mostly from the fighting at Mons, Le Cateau, Ypres and Lilles the previous weekend. In early December 150 British soldiers arrived from Southampton[72] but it was not until the end of September 1915 that substantial numbers of naval casualties began to arrive at Southend, following the Gallipoli campaign, and the average number of beds now occupied at Queen Mary's RN Hospital was 250.[73] Accommodation at the hospital was increased to 300 beds in early 1916 and then to 350 by the end of that year, with increasing numbers of naval casualties following the Battle of Jutland. In March 1917 the Admiralty notified the hospital that, due to pressure at the naval base hospital, all 350 beds would be required for naval casualties and, with War Office agreement, all military casualties were transferred to the Glen, Overcliff and Victoria hospitals and to Chatham.[74] Following the Zeebrugge raid of April 1918 Queen Mary's RN Hospital was at full capacity.

Keeping the Patients Occupied

One of the greatest problems faced by recuperating patients in the hospitals was boredom. To counter this and the potential harm that could result, the patients were kept as busy as possible, either being engaged in making items for sale at the various hospital fares or being entertained (and sometimes being involved in providing entertainment). Artists appearing at the Hippodrome would visit Queen Mary's RN Hospital every Friday afternoon; and there were two concerts, and sometimes more, every week. At Christmas the 'Guy's Minstrels' came down from London to entertain the patients, and many other concert parties visited Queen Mary's (and probably the other hospitals, although less is known about this aspect). Cliff Lester's Concert Party, together with those of Miss Lilly Adams, the Evening News Concert Party, the Leigh-on-Sea Male Choir and Irene Foster's Concert Party are among those who made regular visits to the Naval hospital.[75]

Nurses at each of the hospitals also helped to provide entertainments, including the 'Overcliff Pierettes'.[76] Christmas at each of the hospitals was, quite naturally, a special occasion. At the Glen each patient received a Christmas stocking filled with presents and, following visits by the Mayor and Mayoress, a concert was held. On Boxing Day (1918) 35 of the men attended a pantomime at the Hippodrome, all paid for by friends of the hospital. At each of the hospitals the patients helped with the decorations, competitions being held for the best decorated ward.[77]

Christine Bradford's father was in a musical party that entertained the patients at the naval hospital. He took her (then aged about 9 years) with him; she regarded it a wonderful treat, the nurses allowing her to help push the soldiers around in wheelchairs and spinal carriages.[78] In fine weather wheelchairs were brought to the hospital in order to take patients out and the 'boys in blue' became a very familiar sight in the town during the war years.[79] In 1916 Effie May Oliphant (VAD nurse at the Overcliff) wrote in her diary that she and her parents took two (convalescent) soldiers to the cinema and then to tea at Boots.[80] Southend Council granted free access to wounded servicemen to the Pier, the Pier extension and the Cliffs Bandstand together with the Cliff Lift, from the beginning of the war.

During the summer months, volunteers from the Southend Automobile Club took groups of patients to a variety of local gardens, thrown open by their owners for the purpose. Each of the hospitals also had official or unofficial 'visitors'. Mrs Gilbert and Miss Couzens were visitors at Queen Mary's RN Hospital on Sunday afternoons, when the hospital was open to local residents.[81] Both of these visitors kept an autograph book or album, with signatures of the soldiers and sailors, and brief (sometimes much fuller) accounts of actions they were involved in. Mrs Gilbert was obviously a particular favourite of many of the wounded, some of whom wrote her letters and gave her photographs, which she kept in

her album.[82] In March 1917 an appeal in the local press was made for the names of local residents who would be willing to act as hospital visitors (particularly for wounded in local hospitals who originated in the Channel Islands).[83] However, some concern was raised concerning visitors at the Red Cross hospitals, and it was decided in May 1917 that Commandants of Red Cross hospitals should take over this duty, where possible.[84]

Patients who were mobile were encouraged to be as active as possible, playing various sports (such as croquet , clock golf and bowls) and billiards. There was a billiard room in the Palace Hotel (Queen Mary's RN Hospital) and a Recreation Room was opened for the Overcliff Hospital at Esplanade House, the rent being paid by the Essex Branch of the Red Cross.[85]

Demobilization

In January 1917, at the request of the War Office, County Directors (Red Cross) discussed the closure of the smaller hospitals (those with fewer than 40 beds), which were considered to be uneconomic.[86] In September three of the smaller hospitals in Essex were sent orders to close – Murlow Hills, Lord Lambourne's Hospital and Hamilton Home (Thorpe Bay), none of them under direct Red Cross control.[87]

The Overcliff and Glen were both closed (demobilized) in the early part of 1919, the latter on 28th February. The Overcliff opened again as a hotel by 1920[88] while the Glen was later taken over by the hospital commandant, Wildman Baker as a nursing and maternity home.[89] In June 1918 the Disablement Sub-Committee reported that there were now 1,031 men on their register; several cases (presumably from Queen Mary's RN Hospital) were being treated at the Glen and Overcliff as out-patients. Others were being treated at the Golden Square Ear, Throat and Nose hospital (one for shell-shock), Rustington Convalescent Home and Benenden Sanatorium. Artificial limbs were being repaired and arrangements were being made for training men in tailoring and other crafts at Regents Street Polytechnic and elsewhere.[90]

At the closing function in Queen Mary's RN Hospital (16th May) the patients presented Dr Evelyn Scott and Dr Ronald Sells with illuminated addresses; the roll of patients was called and the Quartermaster had all the men's kit ready for transport to Chatham, the destination of those still being treated. The train carrying the last of the patients left Southend Central station at 5.30 pm. On the following day (Saturday) the nursing and medical staff assembled once again to be thanked by the Commandant, Sir William Hale-White. Following a visit to the Hippodrome Theatre the staff returned to the hospital for dancing in Russia Ward, led by Adam Seebold and his orchestra, and then a rousing three cheers for the matron. The last of Southend's Great War hospitals was closed.

Although complete figures are not available, a total of about 14,500 patients had been treated in Southend's Great War Hospitals, between October 1914 and mid-May 1919. Of these something in the order of 10,000 had been treated at Queen Mary's Royal Naval Hospital, and about 2,500 in the Glen (1,906 by July 1917) and 2,000 in the Overcliff (1,780 up to April 1917).

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3. For example, *A Short Guide to the Formation and Administration of a hospital*, published by the Territorial Force Association for the Flintshire and Denbighshire Voluntary Aid Detachment (Lt Col P.H. Johnston, 1913).
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22. www.naval-history.net/WWINavyBritishLGDecorations1918a (30/10/2014).
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26. Ronald Sells had been a House Surgeon at Guys (*Medical Directory*), and later joined a medical practice in Westcliff-on-Sea.
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31. BRCSA, 006A/1.
32. BRCSA, RCB/2/13/1/11, 08/05/1917.
33. ibid, 19/06/1917.
34. Macpherson, p.215.
35. One of the eight doctors from Southend's Victoria Hospital who worked as visiting physicians at Queen Mary's Hospital. IWM, 16008, 'H.M. Queen Mary's Royal Naval Hospital, Southend-on-Sea, 1914-1919' by W. Hale-White, in *Guys Hospital Report*, LXX, Pt III, pp.25-26.
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37. Macpherson, p.217.
38. BRCSA, RCB/2/13/1/11, 06/06/1917.
39. *S&WG*, 06/04/1917.
40. Ibid, 08/10/1915.
41. Charity Commission, *War Charities Act* (1916).
42. It is not clear why these two hospitals were not registered. In fact, very few hospitals in Essex were registered under the Act, while hospitals in many other parts of the country were registered.
43. IWM 16008 13(41) 811, HM Queen Mary's Royal Naval Hospital.
44. *S&WG*, 18/09/1914, p.13.
45. P. Mansell, *The Girls of Southend High School, 1913-2013* (Kibworth Beauchamp, 2013), p.2.
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47. IWM 16008 13(41) 811.
48. Ibid.
49. *S&WG*, 02/06/1916; it is not clear whether these were general subscribers to the hospital or subscribers to the hospital's 'Splint Fund'. This fund was described as 'the people's fund on behalf of the hospital.' (*S&WG*, 02/03/1917).
50. *S&WG*, 28/04/1916.
51. Information form Nurse Card, BRCS archive.
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53. Her husband was also heavily involved in charity work, particularly in London; he was head of Moss Empires and the Palace Theatre in the City and did much fundraising for St Dunstan's. See also *S&WG*, 29/12/1916.
54. *S&WG*, 06/04/1917.
55. Ibid, 02/02/1917.
56. BRCSA, RCB/2/13/1/11, 28/08/1917.
57. Macpherson, p.220.
58. Members of the Southend Automobile Club and Essex Motor Volunteer Corps also assisted in providing both vehicles and drivers. For example see *S&WG*, 12/05/1916, 'Wounded Soldiers' Motor Rides'.
59. St John (Southend Branch) archives. These are uncatalogued archives held by the Southend branch of the St John Ambulance Brigade. My thanks to Allan Davies of St John Ambulance for allowing access to these archives.
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62. *SS*, 25/04/1918.
63. Ibid, 02/051918.
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65. *S&WG*, 18/05/1917, 'Queen Mary's Hospital: the story of its wonderful work'.
66. IWM 16008, letter to subscribers.
67. *S&WG*, 18/05/1917, as en. 65.
68. *S&WG*, 23/10/1914. By October 30th there were 165 Belgian casualties at the hospital.
69. *SS*, 15/05/1919, p.8, 'Queen Mary's Naval Hospital – Story of a Great Work: The Last Phase'.
70. *S&WG*, 06/11/1914; 46 Belgian wounded at the Glen had arrived from Chatham (presumably being landed at Southend Pier).
71. ERO, S3340, Records of the Hawkins family of Southend, 1905-2006.
72. *S&WG*, 04/12/1914.
73. Ibid, 18/05/1917, as en. 65.
74. Ibid.
75. *SS*, 15/05/1919, p.8.
76. *S&WG*, 14/01/1916.
77. *SS*, 02/01/1919.
78. IWM, 4045 84/46/1, copy of letter providing memories of life in First World War.
79. *SS*, 15/05/1919, p.8.
80. IWM 08/113/1, diary of E.M. Oliphant.
81. *SS*, 15/05/1919, p.8.
82. This album is in the archives of Southend Museum. Mrs Gilbert's Album covers the period from 1915 to early 1916. Miss Couzen's autograph album remains in private hands.
83. *S&WG*, 16/03/1917.
84. BRCSA, RCB/2/13/1/11, 22/05/1917.
85. Ibid, 06/06/1917; *S&WG*, 26/01/1917.
86. Macpherson, p.217-18.
87. BRCSA, RCB/2/13/1/11, 11/09/1917.
88. *Kellys Directory for Southend*, 1920, p.172.
89. *The Medical Directory*. However, there is no mention of the Glen in *Kellys Directory for Southend* after the war.
90. *SS*, 06/06/1918.

Acknowledgements
The author would like to acknowledge the help provided by the staff of the Imperial War Museum, the Essex Record Office and, in particular, Jemma Lee, archivist of the British Red Cross and Allan Davies, Unit Manager, St John Ambulance, Southend-on-Sea.

The Author
Ken Crowe retired as Curator of Human History at Southend Museum in early 2014, having spent over 30 years looking after the local history and archaeology collections. He is now spending time following up some research by the Museum. He developed a special interest in the Great War, having curated an exhibition on that theme for the museum in 2014, based on the museum's collections which include some fascinating material relating to Queen Mary's Royal Naval Hospital.

Book Reviews

Mike Osborne,
Defending Essex,
pp.224, ISBN 978-0-75248-834-9,
The History Press, 2013, £18.99.

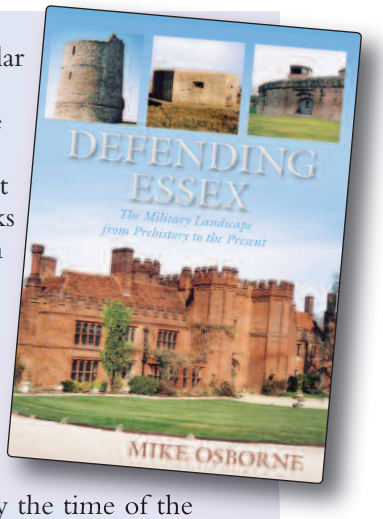
This is an ambitious work that aims to describe the buildings and other man-made works in the county that have at any time served a military purpose. The time span covered is as long as it could possibly be, beginning in Neolithic times and ending in 2012. The geographical area is the present county, including Southend and Thurrock. The author has previously written a companion work *Defending London*. The book is primarily a narrative history, not a work of reference, although, it is possible to use it as such, since, as well as an index, there are ten appendices, which list various types of buildings, establishments and organisations.

It does not just list and describe sites and structures, but places these in their historical context. Where appropriate, there are brief narratives of significant events, such as Boudicca's revolt, and the Civil War siege of Colchester. Also incorporated are details of the military, naval and airforce units which were raised or based in the county. There is so much information that any reader who is not as knowledgeable on the subject as the author himself will learn something new on almost every page. The only difficulty which this reviewer found, in the later chapters, derives from the military habit of referring to almost every organisation, function, or weapon by an abbreviation. A helpful list of these is provided, but the need to turn to it constantly is irksome.

The section covering the prehistoric, Roman and Saxon periods is necessarily short, considering the small number of sites that are known, compared with those of a later date.

When writing about late Mediaeval and Tudor architecture, all historians have to ask how far castles, fortified houses and moated sites (for which Essex is famous) were intended to serve genuinely military purposes. The author's desire to be inclusive leads him to describe many buildings whose towers and battlements are defences against no more than crime and civil disorder, or are merely decoration. Indeed the largest of the three photographs on the front cover is of one such - Leez Priory. It has some vaguely castle-like features; but its token defences could have fooled no one.

From the seventeenth century onwards, things are clearer. Military buildings and structures are distinguishable from non-military ones, either by their design, or by the uses to which they were put. With the exception of the siege of Colchester, and the participation of its troops elsewhere in the country, Essex was little affected by the Civil War. By the beginning of the eighteenth Century, the involvement of the county in war, and the preparation for war, had settled down to a pattern that lasted until the Second World War and beyond.



Like other counties, Essex provided recruits for the regular and reserve forces (the latter originally the Militia, later the Volunteers, Territorial Army and Home Guard). Permanent and temporary defensive works were built whose primary aim was to prevent hostile forces reaching London. Initially the enemy would have sailed up the Thames (to be met by Tilbury and Coalhouse Forts) or tried to land on the coast (defended by the Martello Towers) and march inland. By the time of the two World Wars the enemy also came by air (and for the first time for centuries the defences of the capital were seriously tested). Harwich was an important, if secondary, naval port. Being in the southeast, Essex saw much of the preparation for mounting and supplying campaigns in Europe.

The period of the First and Second World Wars, and up to the present, fills more than half of the book, and is clearly Dr Osborne's special field. By this time the number of permanent and temporary buildings and structures, both in type and in sheer quantity, was huge, even in peacetime, and increased enormously during the conflicts. Barracks, and drill halls, anti aircraft and coastal gun emplacements, pill boxes, spigot mortar mounts, barrage balloon sites, training sites, airfields, radar installations, Royal Observer Corps posts, munitions factories, prisoner of war camps, the 'secret' underground bunkers that are now no secret: Dr Osborne covers them all.

A substantial section of the book is devoted to the concrete defensive structures that still dot the landscape. The general reader will be familiar with the numerous pillboxes and other concrete structures that survive from the Second World War. The sheer number is too great for the book to list them all; but the different types, and their intended uses, are explained. The colour photograph on the back cover is of a type of structure the purpose of which most of us would be hard pressed to guess – a Royal Observer Corps post, actually of post-war date, but based on lessons learned during the war.

It seems appropriate, in this centenary year, to ask what this work may add to our understanding of the First World War. It seems likely that most popular history will concentrate on the experiences of the soldiers on the Western Front and the civilian population at home. This work reminds us that there was a huge amount of military activity in the UK, of which anti-aircraft defence was only part, and that much of this took place in Essex. There was a real fear of a German invasion, which lasted virtually until the end of the war. If the enemy was going to come, it was presumed that he would come over the North Sea, and that Essex would be in the front line.

A corrective to the view that trench warfare came as a surprise to the generals in 1914 is the fact that, even before the war, preparations were made for the rapid creation of a line of entrenchments to defend London.

The book is well illustrated with 142 photographs, all but a few of them by the author, which proves, if proof were needed, that he knows the sites that he writes of from personal visits.

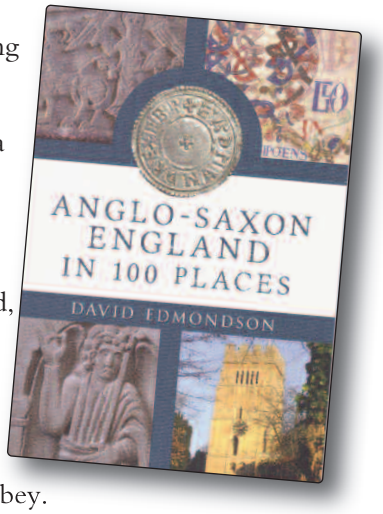
This book is perhaps not primarily for the dedicated enthusiast. But even someone with knowledge of a subject can take pleasure from reading a story he already knows, if it is as well told as this is. The general reader will find it packed with information that he or she might otherwise have had to go to a number of different works to find.

Richard Harris

David Edmondson, Anglo-Saxon England in 100 Places, pp.96, ISBN 978-1-44564-315-1, Amberley Publishing, 2014, £12.99.

This nicely illustrated short book introduces the reader to Anglo-Saxon England through its buildings, archaeology, place-names, art, poetry, coinage and myths, a prodigious goal in 96 pages. The back cover summary that the guide is a comprehensive description to Anglo-Saxon England is a touch optimistic, for in so short a space it does so by selecting places of particular Saxon interest to summarise why these are of relevance, and by confining the text to a paragraph or two for each place.

The book reflects the abode and interest of the author and treats northern England in more detail than the south. The 11 page Introduction overviews the expansion of Anglo-Saxon influence in to Britain, the Viking conflicts and the growth of Christianity. By contending that the conversion to Christianity came in 597 with St Augustine's arrival in Canterbury does not do justice to the Celtic Christianity flourishing in the north and west long before that.



Northumbria and Mercia occupy some 66 pages, and Wessex 16 pages. Essex, treated under East Anglia in three pages, is allowed five entries, Hadstock, Greensted, Bradwell, Chickney and Maldon. London's entry consists mainly of what may be seen at the British Museum and Library, V & A and Westminster Abbey.

The water colour paintings and the many attractive colour photographs enhance the text; I suspect many were taken by the author himself. Using the book for reference is difficult in that it lacks an Index, and a Bibliography would have enhanced it further. The text is easy to read and in an enjoyable unencumbered style.

James Kemble

Peter Minter, The Brickmaker's Tale, pp.112, ISBN 978-0-95634-986-6, The Bulmer Brick and Tile Co Ltd, 2014, £30.00 including postage and packing.

Cheques payable to Peter Minter c/o The Bulmer Brick and Tile Co Limited, The Brickfields, Bulmer, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 7EF

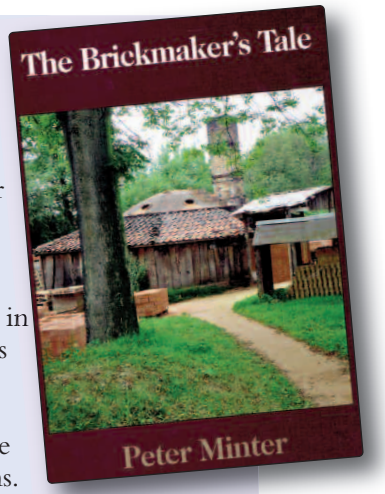
In recent years there has been a significant increase in interest in the history of brickmaking, brickworks and brick buildings in Essex. This has resulted in a number of publications, the latest being *The Brickmaker's Tale* by Peter Minter, a director of Bulmer Brick and Tile Co Limited. This excellent A4 hardback is well illustrated and includes photographs, many in colour, of the brickworks, brickmakers and buildings where Bulmer bricks have been used. Some historic illustrations are of the brickworks and former employees throughout the last century.

The brickyard at Bulmer in north Essex was purchased by Lawrence Minter in 1936 when his son Peter was a young boy. The book contains his recollections, more fact than tales, of nearly 80 years. The many craftsmen and characters employed over the decades with their memories and anecdotes, makes fascinating reading. Of particular interest is, the war years, its difficulties and the blackout regulations applying to brickworks and kilns. During the war many drainage pipes were made at Bulmer for the construction of airfields in Essex and Suffolk. The relevant airfields are shown on maps of both counties. Towards the end of the war and during the immediate post war years, pottery was also made at Bulmer.

The comparatively recent rebuilding of one kiln and the construction of a second kiln are fully detailed and illustrated. These are both downdraught kilns, but former updraught kilns not used since the 1930s remain on site. The Minter family also farm surrounding land and their farming activities at Hole Farm are also recorded. It was whilst ploughing in 1958 that a medieval tile kiln was discovered and carefully excavated by archaeologists. The previous year, a Bronze Age burial urn and other artefacts were discovered. These finds indicate that the area around the brickyard has been occupied, albeit intermittently, for some three thousand years.

Book Reviews

Bulmer bricks are still made by hand in the traditional method, which has existed for many years. These bricks are now used mainly for restoration work on many buildings throughout the country including Hampton Court, Oxburgh Hall and in Essex, Layer Marney Towers, Coggeshall Hall, Feering Church and Hill Hall at Theydon Mount to name but a few. Considerable quantities of bricks were supplied for renovations and extensions to St Pancras Station after it was chosen as the terminus for Eurostar. It was found that the original bricks had been made *c.*1870 by Allens of Ballingdon, only three miles from Bulmer. When bricks were provided for Claridges Hotel in London it was discovered that the facing bricks had been supplied by Mark Gentry, a master brickmaker of Sible Hedingham. Interestingly, some of Mark Gentry's moulds from the late nineteenth century are now in the possession of Bulmer Brick and Tile Co and occasionally used. As other brickworks in Essex and Suffolk closed, Lawrence and later Peter Minter purchased moulds, machinery and many other items. One example, detailed in the book with photographs is the closure of Corder's Brick, Tile and Pottery Works at Sible Hedingham in 1942 when Lawrence Minter purchased numerous lots at the auction.



Brickmaking by hand is often of interest to television producers. This started 50 years ago with Anglia Televisions *Bygones* programme and has continued with numerous other programmes including BBC *Pebble Mill at One*. Even pupils at Bulmer School were filmed in Victorian costume 'working' in the brickyard for BBC's Schools programme *Then and Now*. A chapter suitably titled, 'In front of the Camera' is devoted to the numerous television connections.

Fortunately, Bulmer Brick and Tile Company survived, despite struggles and petty regulations. It is providing an extremely valuable service to property owners, builders, architects and other clients with producing much needed hand made bricks for essential restoration work. Long may it continue! I commend this important record of archaeology, agriculture, brickmaking, brick buildings, social and local history to you.

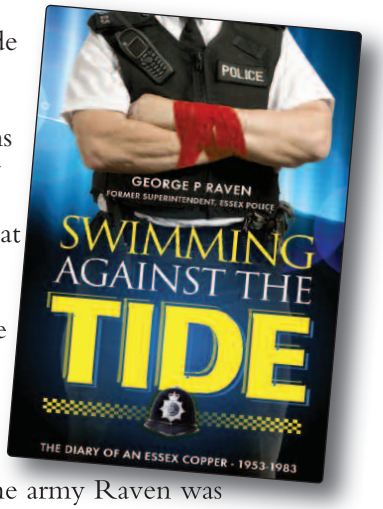
Adrian Corder-Birch.

George P. Raven, Swimming against the Tide: The Diary of an Essex Copper 1953-1983, pp.517, ISBN 978-1-86151-178-2, Mereo Books, 2014, £14.50.

There is a tired old cliche which suggests that everyone has a book in them. But unless the intending writer has a household name or a spectacular story to tell, such a book will almost certainly have to be self-published. Nowadays some inexperienced writers can make their own way without anyone's help, and produce an unstructured story which is readable only on the dedicated device operated by a well known internet company. Other writers wanting the satisfaction of seeing their views printed in a paperback book might employ one of the many printing companies which offer financial packages; these can include editorial and marketing advice together with some basic publicity about the finished product.

One such company is Mereo Books, and its website advises intending writers to remember that if people are going to pay to read about their experiences then the writer must have a positive attitude towards his or her story, and not include vast details about relatively trivial matters. 'Life stories which read like one long grumble will attract few readers. Focus on the humour, the achievements (without boasting too much), the good friends you made'.

This volume is published by Mereo Books, and its



title derives from a comment made about George Raven by his last chief constable (who is still alive and active and whom he mentions by name several times in a mostly negative way). In the 12 pages of the introduction Raven admits that he himself has a critical eye and a cynical way of looking at life and of his fellow men. 'I don't believe I am a misanthrope but I do despair for many of them and trust very few'. This attitude shows up throughout the book.

Having previously served in the army Raven was determined to be a detective and seems to have been quite annoyed to find that he had first to join as a uniformed police officer! After the stipulated period when he had passed his exams he became a sergeant in the CID, but had occasional periods of service in uniform before eventually becoming a detective superintendent. He admits that he might have made higher rank if he had learned humility and realised that senior officers also have to be politicians.

Sometimes retired police officers who write fail to make the necessary adjustment in style from police management reports to more literary pieces of prose. This is where one benefits from having one's script read critically by a couple of informed but impartial readers, and then having the humility to accept at least some of their suggestions! The book which results is likely to be more interesting to a greater range of readers.

But whether or not Mereo Books' clients accept the company's advice on content and self editing, the resulting book will still be published as the writer is, of course, paying for the privilege. Raven's book comprises 15 chapters, seven appendices and more than five hundred pages. On the face of it the chapters have titles covering significant years of his career, e.g. The Probationer (1953-55); and Fraud Squad (1961-64), but he does not always stick to a chronological structure and is often side tracked into discussing events out of sequence. This leads to sometimes irritating comments throughout the text such as 'You'll remember if you were paying attention', and 'I digress again', or rhetorical questions such as 'What would you do?' The writer has lived in Spain for many years but still seems to have strong and sometimes intolerant views on current policing issues and attitudes. Some of these appear in one or other of the seven appendices on subjects ranging from rape and cautions to crime prevention and racism.

Having worked my way through Raven's book I am left with a sense of regret at the opportunities he has missed for telling a more organised and balanced account of one Essex policeman's career during 30 years of great changes in society, and thus in policing methods. There is so much more he could have profitably included with better research and editing. He might then have realised, for example, that in one chapter he had confused his initial training establishment of Eynsham Hall in Oxfordshire with Bramshill in Hampshire, then the National Police College.

Taking advice on structure and editing, including removing most of the caustic comments made about individuals that are recognisable by another retired officer even if not named, would have made this weighty volume shorter and potentially easier to read by a wider audience.

Maureen Scollan

A.J. Carson (editor), J. Ashdown-Hill, D. Johnson, W. Johnson and P.J. Langley, **Finding Richard III: The Official Account of Research by the Retrieval and Reburial Project**, pp.96, ISBN 978-0-95768-402-7, Imprimis Imprimatur, 2014, £8.50.

The recent reburial of Richard III in Leicester cathedral, in March, 2015, has revived all the excitement felt when his skeleton was discovered in a car park at Leicester in 2012. With this book we have the 'only Official Account of all the efforts that went into finding Richard III', a project which took many years of historical research, fundraising and archaeological investigation. Richard III was killed at the battle of Bosworth on 22 August, 1485, and was buried in the choir of the Greyfriars church in Leicester. Probably in the mid-1490s, Henry VII erected an alabaster tomb over his grave. After the Dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII, the Greyfriars site was purchased by the Herrick family, and a pillar erected over the grave, as was recorded in 1612. The story that Richard III's body was disposed of in the River Soar at the Dissolution was widely believed in Leicester but turned out in recent years to be a myth.

The Looking for Richard Project was launched in February, 2009, and faced the formidable task of locating the Greyfriars church in Leicester as well as the grave itself. By then, a considerable amount of historical research had been done. Moreover the medical research into DNA sequencing raised the hope of identifying the skeleton, if discovered. At a conference at Mechelen in 2003, held to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the death of Margaret of York, duchess of Burgundy, sister of Richard III, John Ashdown-Hill proposed that steps should be taken to try to establish a mtDNA sequence for Margaret and her family, and was willing to undertake the task. Margaret could be traced back in the female line to her great-grandmother, Katherine Swynford, mistress and subsequently wife of John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, in the late fourteenth century. By tracing the descendants in the female line down to the twenty-first century, a female descendant was found in Canada in 2004.

When the dig started in 2012, the archaeologists had to locate the Greyfriars church and then identify the choir. The objective of discovering the grave was achieved when a skeleton with curvature of the spine (due to scoliosis) and evidence of severe battle-wounds was exhumed on 4-5 September, 2012. The subsequent investigation revealed the Y-chromosome which confirmed that the skeleton was male. On 4 February, 2013, it was announced that the skeleton's mtDNA sequence matched that of Richard III's Canadian descendant.

The book reads like a fascinating detective story. The editor and authors have produced a clear and concise analysis of how Richard III was found, with maps and illustrations showing the precise location of the Greyfriars site and of the trenches of the dig. A number of documents illustrating the steps in the process of finding Richard are included as appendices, and a bibliography is supplied for readers who want to take their studies further.

Jennifer Ward

Book Reviews

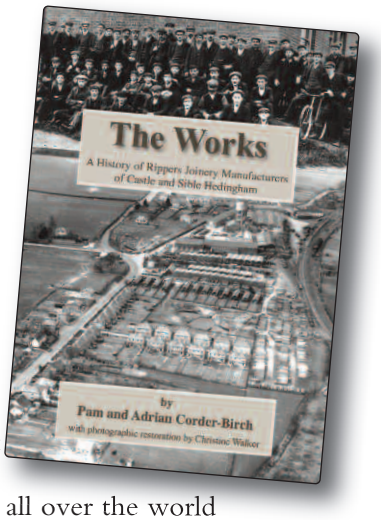
Pam & Adrian Corder-Birch
The Works: A History of Rippers Joinery Manufacturers of Castle and Sible Hedingham,

pp.224, ISBN 978-0-95672-192-1.
Published by A. Corder-Birch, D.L., 2014, £14.95.
Available from the authors: Pam & Adrian Corder-Birch, Rustlings, Howe Drive, Halstead, Essex. CO9 2QL
email: corder-birch@lineone.net

The Works is a history of Rippers Limited, a joinery company with origins from the late nineteenth century, the family who ran it and the people who worked for it. This is not merely a tome about a joinery company, for it is also a history of the Ripper family (at least those connected with the companies). I think that most people will be envious of the extensive genealogy in this book and amassing such a history must have taken the authors much time indeed. With the analysis of each family member, the information is tied nicely to the part that they played in the four Ripper companies. Key figures from the companies' history (that were not part of the family), have also been included for completeness.

This is a thoughtfully researched and very well published history of one of the significant joinery and timber companies of Essex and indeed England. I use the word significant because the companies of which the book documents, had a huge impact on the villages of Sible and Castle Hedingham and were major players in the production of joinery and timber products. Before reading this book, I was unaware of the significance that Rippers had on the local landscape and economy. Glancing at some of the wonderful photographs (restored by Christine Walker) within this book; the scale of The Works (as it was known by those who worked there or lived locally) becomes readily apparent. In the early twentieth century they showed the best of intentions as an employer, building some 94 houses for their workers in Sible Hedingham. Although the local railway was small and only ran from Chappel and Wakes Colne to Haverhill, it connected to a large network and Rippers had their own sidings to help cope with their enormous output. The aerial photograph on the cover and page 41, illustrates the scale of this industry particularly well. Driving through Sible Hedingham now, it is difficult to imagine that so much of the village and what is seen today, is the result of The Works and the endeavours of the Ripper family.

The companies operated for nearly a century up until the 1970s, where we see mergers and take-overs and the eventual demise of The Works at Sible Hedingham; helped in no small part by the closing of the Colne Valley and Halstead Railway in the 1960s. The book takes us from early endeavours to later triumphs. The Ripper family and The Works made such an impact on Sible and Castle Hedingham, that it is only fitting that their role be documented. This book is a wonderful attempt to do that and as a reader with no connections to the Hedinghams, the companies or the families, I find this to be an engaging historical account of the local people and industry. Local might not be the most appropriate word though, because lumber from all over the world found its way into The Works and the products from here, were sent across East Anglia, England and the world. Products took many forms, from building components to aeroplane propellers, staircases to kitchens.



Among their regular work, Rippers helped the war effort in the Second Boer War, First World War and Second World War, manufacturing joinery products of all kinds. The Works was large-enough to run its own fire brigade during the Second World War. Sadly, the scale of The Works, meant that it was singled out by the Luftwaffe and bombed in the Second World War. Men from Rippers ran social clubs and manned the Sible Hedingham Fire Brigade. The authors have tried to include information on as many employees as possible, although to include an authoritative roll-call was not possible, a good deal of former 'men of the works' have been included. It is pleasing to me that so much information has survived and that it has been possible for the authors to write this book.

I have a keen interest in wood but anyone with an interest in local history will find this book interesting. Such was the scale of The Works, that this book covers such varied topics as timber production, joinery, transport including onsite, trains and lorries, social history, machinery and industrial buildings. There will be something for everyone in this book. The thing that this book leaves with me though, is a feeling that it would be nice to return to an era of companies like Rippers, where a person could be employed locally and potentially for their entire working life by a single company. Today's corporations and ethos of both centralisation and global reach means that companies like Rippers are now in the majority of cases, consigned to the history books. Rippers saw young lads start out as apprentices and work their way into a myriad of different roles within the companies, from engineers to blacksmiths, from machinists to French polishers. The authors have managed to capture in one book that which is a huge part of the local history of Sible and Castle Hedingham.

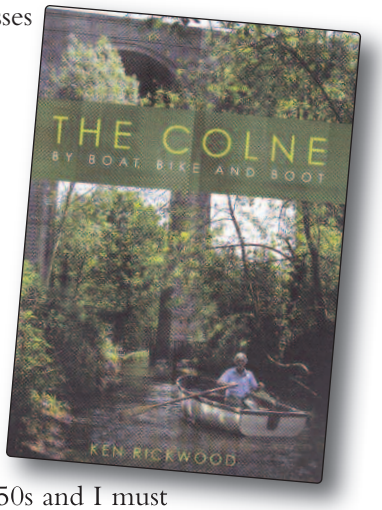
Jason Townsend

Book Reviews

Ken Rickwood,
The Colne: by Boat Bike and Boot,
pp.384, ISBN 978-0-95582-716-7
David Cleveland, 2013, £15.

This copiously illustrated (black and white photos) book is far more than an account of a journey along Essex's River Colne from its North Sea entry at Colne Point in St Osyth to its source just 42 miles away in the north east of the county.

The author has packed in an enormous amount of information about each of the towns and villages along the way and for this reader the historical focus reminded me that contemporary delight in the river as a source of pretty views is to completely miss the significance of it as a water and energy source shaping the industrial history of the area. To be shown more than 40 mills once operated by water power in the region and and that for example in Halstead they were key to Courtaulds expansion of their silk business, was a revelation. The legal battle that ensued when Courtauld could not get enough energy for his mill because a second mill had long-standing water rights showed all was not sweetness and light once exploitation of an asset became central to industrialisation.



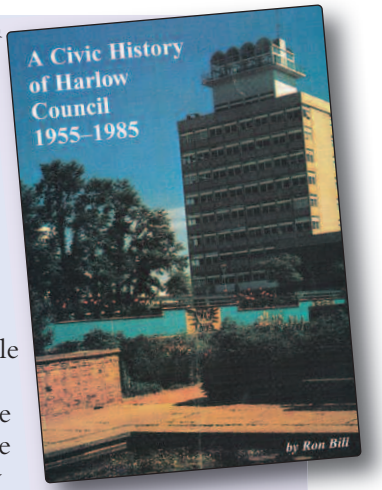
As someone who crosses Colchester's Middle mill every day on the way to his allotment I was fascinated to see a photo of three Corporation dustcarts crossing the ford just below the mill in 1927 as well one of the World War Two tank traps overlooking the same pool in Lower Castle park. The lovely picture of Middle Mill itself in 1900 makes one despair of its loss in the '50s and I must wholeheartedly concur with the authors plea for a present power usage for the weir and his approval of Benham's judgement that the demolition of the mill was an outstanding example of 'vandalistic myopia by a local authority'.

If you live near the Colne this book will open you eyes to its treasures, if you don't, read it and you will wish you did!

Michael Fox

Ron Bill,
A Civic History of Harlow Council, 1955–1985,
pp. 208, published by the author, 2010, £12.00 including postage and packing.
Available from the author at: 63 Upper Park, Harlow, CM20 1TP.

The author, in his introduction, indicates that his aim is to record the work and achievements of the first 30 years of Harlow Council, and to illustrate the wide-ranging areas of responsibility of a local authority. Harlow was one of the post-war new towns; its first house was occupied in 1949 and, though it grew rapidly, the area was initially administered by Epping Rural District Council and four parish councils. Ron Bill, who worked for the local authority from 1968 till his retirement, chronicles how the Harlow Urban District Council was established in 1955 - without premises, officers or precedents – and how it developed, through the enthusiasm and dedication of those involved, into the effective local government which eventually took over full responsibility from the Harlow Development Corporation.



Though it is now customary to be cynical about the new town movement, it is good to be reminded of the altruism which propelled the creation of a decent civic environment for people to live in. Ron Bill details, year by year, the wide range of problems tackled, and the decisions, made by the new council, though he makes no attempt to be analytical about these, and the lack of any form of index will frustrate future researchers. That said, it remains an impressively detailed account of the growth of social and political awareness of a newly created local authority.

Michael Leach

Your Book Reviewers are: Adrian Corder-Birch, Chairman of the Essex Journal Editorial Board; **Michael Fox,** a retired Archdeacon and now a resident of Colchester and keen allotment holder; **Richard Harris,** former Archive Service Manager of the Essex Record Office and medievalist; **James Kemble,** retired Consultant Surgeon to St Bartholomew's Hospital, currently Coordinator of the Essex Place-names Project; **Michael Leach,** a retired GP, now concentrating on local history; **Maureen Scollan,** former Police Inspector, now a historian and author; **Jason Townsend,** currently leading on the development of the Essex Journal website; **Jennifer Ward,** well known historian, author, and tutor.

EJ 20 Questions? Martin Stuchfield

Martin Stuchfield was born at Maldon in 1957 during the period when his parents were living at nearby Tolleshunt D'Arcy. Following a career in business he was fortunate to be able to take early retirement in 2004 and has subsequently devoted himself to numerous charitable activities. He has developed an interest in the study of monumental brasses from schooldays. Having joined the Monumental Brass Society in 1970 he is currently President. He has served as President of the Essex Archaeological and Historical Congress (2001-4) and the Essex Society for Archaeology and History (2008-11). He was appointed a Magistrate in 2006 and is currently Chairman of the Victoria County History of Essex Trust; a Director and Trustee of the Rural Community Council of Essex; and was recently elected Secretary of the Friends of Essex Churches Trust.

1. What is your favourite historical period? The 18th century following the religious upheavals of the previous two centuries and before the extensive restoration of our churches during the Victorian era.

2. Tell us what Essex means to you? A highly underrated county that is not flat and densely occupied by industry as the uninitiated would have us believe.

3. What historical mystery would you most like to know? Who my eight times Great Grandfather John Stuchfield was descended from in the early 17th century.

4. My favourite history book is... *The History and Antiquities of Essex* by Philip Morant.

5. What is your favourite place in Essex? Thaxted, with its wonderfully imposing 15th century Guildhall and the largely contemporary and glorious church. Reminders of the wealth and importance of this market town derived from cutlery manufacture. The church contains an important and fine brass portraying a priest in academical dress of *c.*1450 date.

6. How do you relax? The opportunity rarely presents itself.

7. What are you researching at the moment? For the last five years I have been researching and compiling data for *The Monumental Brasses of Norfolk*; part of the *County Series* – a seminal work illustrating all medieval brasses and selected Victorian examples. To date seventeen volumes (Bedfordshire to Huntingdonshire) have been published. Essex was published in 2003.

8. My earliest memory is... at the age of 2¼ when my brother came home from the maternity hospital. I am still trying to get over the shock!

9. What is your favourite song/piece of music and why? *Land of Hope and Glory* because it makes me proud to be British.

10. If you could travel back in time which event would you change? The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria which ultimately led to the First World War resulting in a huge loss of life.

11. Which four people from the past would you invite to dinner? Judge George Kempe (d.1606) of Pentlow; Rev William Holman (d.1730) – antiquary; William Morris (1834-96) – artist, craftsman, poet; and Captain Lawrence Oates (1880-1912) – explorer. All good Essex men.

12. What is your favourite food? Smoked Salmon and steak (medium/rare) or Dover sole (on the bone) with crème brûlée to follow.

13. The history book I am currently reading is... *The Lady in the Tower: The Fall of Anne Boleyn.* A lady with strong Essex connections whose father's magnificent monumental brass can be seen at Hever, Kent.

14. What is your favourite quote from history? '*I know I have the body of a weak, feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too*'. Speech by Queen Elizabeth I to the Troops at Tilbury in 1588.

15. Favourite historical film? *The Life and Times of Lord Mountbatten* first screened on television in 1969. A person I greatly admire who was assassinated in 1979.

16. What is your favourite building in Essex? The mellow Tudor brick of Rochford Hall and Church in their enchanting setting.

17. What past event would you like to have seen? To have been part of the crowd outside Buckingham Palace celebrating Victory in Europe on 8th May 1945.

18. How would you like to be remembered? Somebody who gave my children a better start in life and who made a difference.

19. Who inspires you to read or write or research history? My late mother who was a great inspiration and source of encouragement and the late Nancy Briggs to whom I am indebted.

20. Most memorable historical date? 22nd April 1884 – the Great Colchester Earthquake.

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