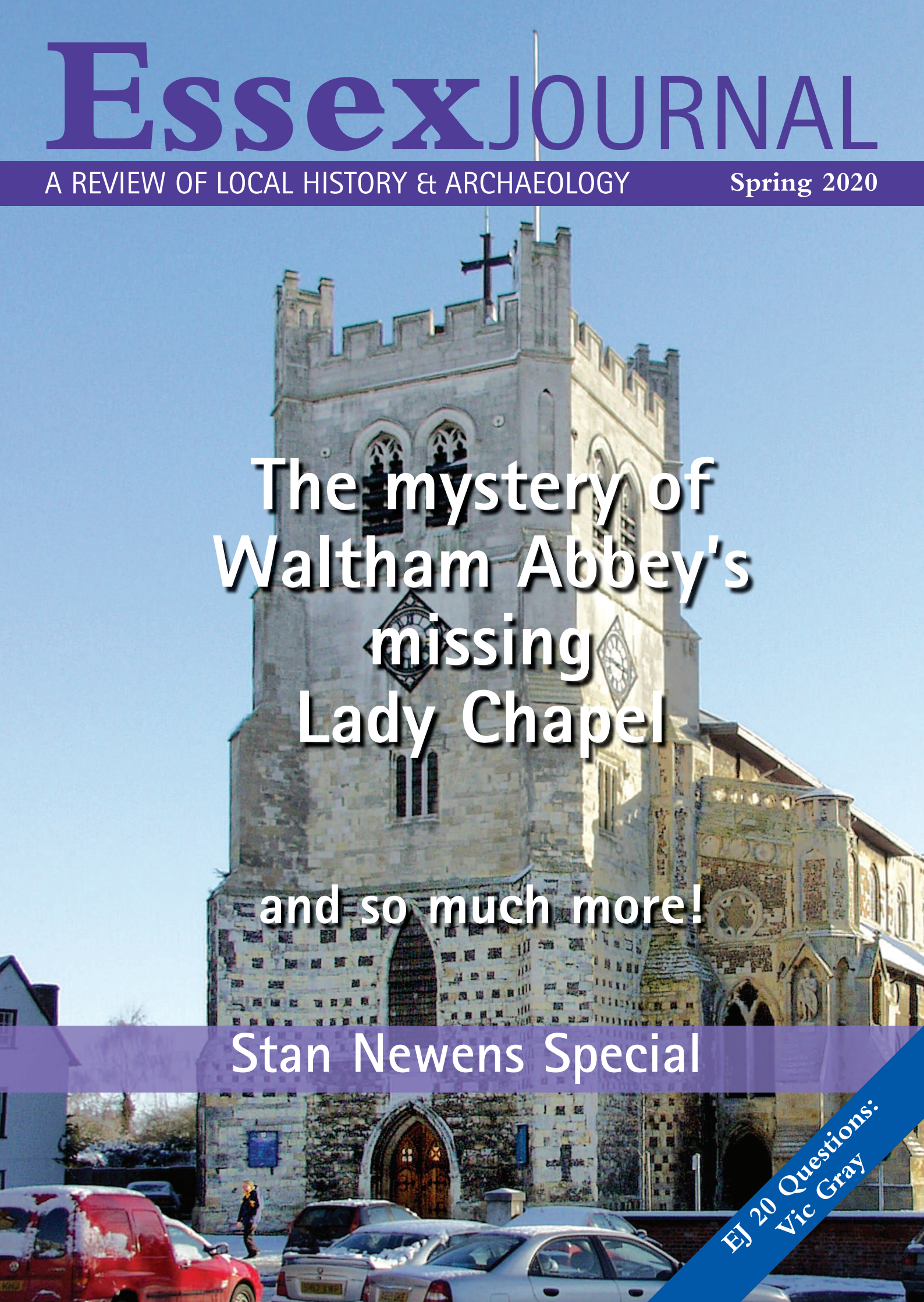


# Essex JOURNAL

A REVIEW OF LOCAL HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

Spring 2020



## The mystery of Waltham Abbey's missing Lady Chapel

and so much more!

Stan Newens Special

EJ 20 Questions:  
Vic Gray





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Well, what funny old days we're living through. I thought that once we got the 2019 election and ratification of the Brexit withdrawal agreement out of the way, that the news would calm down for a bit. It did but then the COVID-19 pandemic came, and all the associated restrictions that have come with it. It's a very odd feeling that, apart from working from home and limiting trips outside, my life has continued very much as normal. Fortunately I have a garden I can escape to and, indeed, I've hardly left its curtilage. It has been a calm and reflective space made slightly surreal because 'outside' I am aware that an epic battle for the health of the nation is going on. It's dangerous to make comparisons to events that happened 80 years ago, but there is a faint echo of those times. While the British Expeditionary Force were fighting for its survival during the retreat to the coast and, later, when the RAF were struggling to defend the skies over the country, many must have heard about those events without having any direct experiences of them, then as now. Some of the images we have seen from hospitals show exhausted NHS staff (and other carers) at the end of long shifts with impressions of face masks on their faces, makes us all grateful that they really are the heroes/heroines of the hour and we thank them for all that they are doing for us.

I am also struck by how instant answers to the innumerable problems that keep on arising are required, even demanded. Perhaps this is as a result of the 24/7 society that we now live in. Speaking to a senior government scientist recently, I was told that it will take many months to crunch all the numbers and statistics to get a really meaningful set of answers to the decisions that were made. By then many will not care although for historians I'm sure there will be plenty to discuss. The other curious thing I have felt has been attitudes to death, it's almost as if many have been surprised that people die. Nobody wants to lose anyone, but even in an average year around 1,500 people die a day from a whole range of causes. Perhaps as historians we're very much aware that we are only the latest in a long line of people stretching back into the past. Is it because today we are relatively isolated from death that we find this an issue? Is there a belief that modern medicine can keep us all alive forever? A quick look through the pages of a nineteenth century burial register will show just what our forebears experienced when it came to mortality – we are very lucky to live now.

And so to this bumper issue dedicated to our friend Stan Newens to mark his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and what a pleasure it has been to oversee. Stan has been an incredible supporter of all things to do with history and archaeology in Essex, including this publication and to me personally. I hope, reflecting Stan's interests, that there is something for everyone, from Dark Ages Essex to modern terraced housing. And if you do not know Stan, then Jeremy Corbyn MP and our own Adrian Corder-Birch write fittingly

about him in their appreciations. And as the long-standing President of Waltham Abbey Historical Society it is only appropriate we feature the church on the cover.

The chapel of St Peter-on-the-Wall, Bradwell, is probably familiar to us all but I expect that there will not be many of us who knows much about the origins of the name of the Roman Saxon Shore fort from which it is built – *Othona*. No excuses now as Andrew Breeze takes us through the subject. Jumping forwards a few centuries and to the west of the county, Lawrence Greenall and Steve Miller share with us their researches into the Lady Chapel at Waltham Abbey. A couple of years ago James Bettley and I were given a tour round the church by the authors and it was a fascinating day out, mooching around odd corridors with stairs going nowhere – a complicated story of building that is so interesting.

The ever productive Michael Leach has managed to find some time in his busy researching schedule to look at the fate of a manuscript collection. This highlights just how precarious the fate of documents could be and how lucky we are to have as, we do, in archives across the land. This is followed by Adrian Corder-Birch looking at Black Notley Watermill which is superbly illustrated from the author's own collection of images. This is a subject, which Adrian reminds us, is very close to Stan's heart.

Ted Woodgate takes us back to a time when the franchise was not universal (something we take for granted now) and how political contests were just as keenly fought. I smiled when I read that 'The depression became more severe...the Conservative and Liberal Unionist government would be secure for the next six years. The prospects for any kind of radical political advance appeared distinctly bleak.' Sounds a bit like the last ten years –there's really nothing new under the sun! And to finish the articles Ken Newman looks at that most familiar type of housing – the terrace. This article took me back to my days in Norwich when I lived in a succession of terraces.

To go with this bumper edition, a bumper selection of book reviews for you and to finish, former County Archivist Vic Gray shares with us his 20 answers. Serendipitously his favourite building is Waltham Abbey and, there we go, we're back to the beginning again.

That's all for now, hope you enjoy the issue and between now and the autumn issues I do wish you and yours well.

Cheers,

Neil





## British Association for Local History award for *Essex Journal*

Each year the British Association for Local History makes its 'Publications and Research Awards'. The Reviews Editor chooses a longlist of articles from all the hundreds of journals and society magazines which are received each year, and a panel of assessors then selects the winners – this year, four long articles and four shorter ones. We're delighted to announce that the runner-up in the 'long article' category this year is Neil Wiffen's 'Supplying the army: the contribution of Essex to provisioning the forces of Edward III, c.1337', which was published in the *Essex Journal*, 54, 1 (2019). The assessors were really impressed with Neil's work, not only because it tackled such a challenging subject (after all, most local historians are very shy of approaching medieval history because the sources can be very daunting) but also because of the systematic way in which he'd analysed the material. One wrote that 'This author writes with infectious enthusiasm. He sets his topic in context and makes very good use of both secondary and primary sources both in print and manuscript. He has worked on technically difficult records and shown considerable ingenuity in investigating how far the state's demand for food supplies for the army was fulfilled in Essex'. It presents a very good picture of how war or the threat of it impacted economically on local communities in the fourteenth century, and it's just the sort of article which should inspire others to look at the same topic in their own areas. Many congratulations to Neil, and to the journal. The article is being republished in *The Local Historian* in July 2020, so it will be going national!

More information on the work of the BALH can be found on our website:

**[www.balh.org.uk](http://www.balh.org.uk)**

Dr Alan Crosby, Editor of *The Local Historian*

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# Tindal Street interpretation boards

One of the pleasures of being the Honorary Editor of *Essex Journal* is that I have been, to a small extent, able to influence what has been published in these pages over the years. An example was asking Dr James Bettley to undertake some research into the history of Tindal Street, Chelmsford, and the resulting article, 'The great progress of the place in modern times': the Chelmsford Planning Survey and the High Chelmer development, 1945–73, (51, 2 (2016)) has been a highlight that has attracted much interest since it was published. Most recently this came to the attention of Chelmsford City Council (CCC) who contacted James to ask to reproduce text and images from it for an interpretation board, one of a series, that was to be displayed on Tindal Street. Along with James the *Essex Journal* was very happy to help make this happen and here Hannah Dungate of CCC explains the background:

Tindal Street is the lost gem of Chelmsford. In order to interpret Chelmsford's history and enhance the appearance of the Street, five heritage information boards have recently been installed along the blank side wall of Boots at the High Chelmer shopping centre. The project complements a wider heritage enhancement programme for Chelmsford, which includes the installation of heritage interpretation boards, blue plaques, public art and large historic images at key destinations within the City Centre.

Tindal Street itself has a rich history – one that is often lamented by many local residents to this day. The boards seek to unearth this history, so that it can be celebrated as Chelmsford grows. Its narrative begins with the origins of Tindal Street and ends in modern-day Chelmsford, in the years following the High Chelmer development. Topics covered include the many Public Houses which once stood in the Street, as well as the story of Shire Hall, which sits in Tindal Square. Seven large scale historic images also accompany the boards, showcasing what this part of the city once used to look like.

Below, Chelmsford City Council's interpretation boards and historic photographs on Tindal Street (N. Wiffen, 22/03/20). Right, the board on High Chelmer that includes information from the *Essex Journal*. (CCC)

Chelmsford City Council would like to thank the local community for their continuing support, as well as all those who made a valued contribution to the creation of this picture wall. In particular, Chelmsford Museum, Essex Record Office, *Essex Journal*, High Chelmer, Dr James Bettley, Cath D'Alton, David Lambert, Alan Pamphilon and Neil Wiffen.

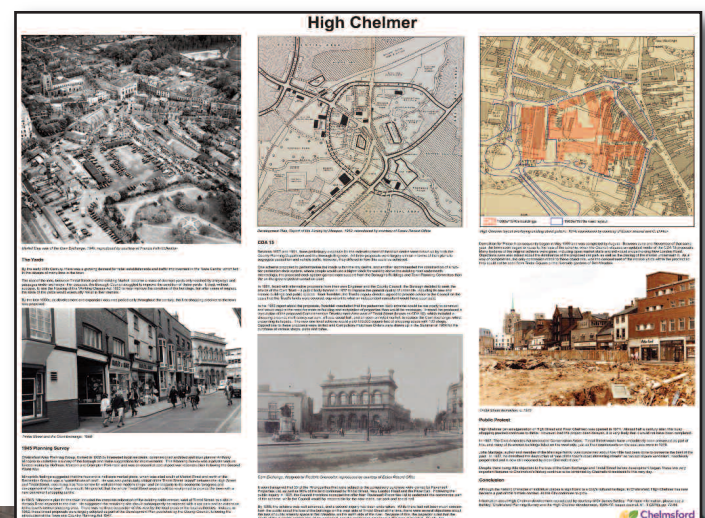
If you would like more information about Chelmsford's blue plaques and where to find them, please visit [www.chelmsford.gov.uk/blue-plaques](http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/blue-plaques).

I know that James is equally pleased with the influence that his research has had and the importance of the subject:

The destruction of Tindal Street and the construction of High Chelmer dramatically changed the appearance of Chelmsford. The evocative images on these boards show just what was lost and it is excellent that Chelmsford City Council have taken the initiative to remind us so vividly of what was once here.

We are all thrilled that the history of our county matters and that what we are all doing through the pages of *Essex Journal* is very worthwhile and has, in this instance, inspired CCC.

Neil Wiffen





# Boxted Airfield Museum:

## New Displays for 2020

In the spring 2018 issue of *Essex Journal* I wrote a short piece on the 75th anniversary of Boxted Airfield, located to the NW of Colchester. By 2019 its museum had expanded to three buildings, the newest principally houses the museum's collection of Martin B-26 Marauder related material, an American medium bomber of which there were over 500 in the county, with the US 9th Army Air Force, by April 1944.

Last year the museum, operated by the Boxted Airfield Historical Group, a registered charity, opened a new Marauder display. This included the new home for the tail section of *Mr. Shorty*, a B26C Marauder medium bomber, serial 41-35253. This is the largest piece of a Marauder surviving in this country and is on loan from Marks Hall from where it operated on the adjacent airfield at Earls Colne. Boxted was initially a Marauder base for the 386th Bomb Group briefly in 1943 before being replaced by the 354th Fighter Group flying P51 Mustangs, and subsequently the 56th FG with P47 Thunderbolts. All this is related in the museum displays.

A new feature in building three is the recreation of the nose layout of a Marauder. It features items from *Mr. Shorty* and, additionally, the Radio Operator and Navigators positions are represented by relevant equipment.

Also new is a display of second world war military uniforms. These include the uniform of Lt Colonel Glenn Grau, CO of 556BS operating Marauders out of Chipping Ongar and of Corporal Marty Thibo, initially in the Armaments section of 387BG, then a

base military policeman in the 53rd Air Service Group at Chipping Ongar. Female uniforms include Private Christine Warren of the ATS who, from the grenade badge on her tunic and the red shoulder flashes, was assigned to the Anti-Aircraft Command and, may have worked on Royal Artillery Ack-ack control at Blake Hall. She married Private Murriel Turner, a USAAF 53rd Air Service Group medic on 13th September 1944. There is also the tunic and flying jacket of Captain Jack Norton, a Signals Corps officer assigned to the 354th FG at Boxted. He went ashore on Omaha Beach on D-Day to establish a forward operating base for the 353rd FS and eventually became the Squadron Adjutant.

The uniforms display would not have been possible without the generous support by our members plus supporters in USA. Additionally, we are grateful for grants from the Friends of Historic Essex, the Essex Society for Archaeology & History and the Essex Heritage Trust.

Readers are invited to visit the museum normally open on the last Sunday of each month from March to October, plus 12th & 13th September 2020, 10.00-16.00. Admission donation £4. Located off Langham Lane, Langham, near Colchester CO4 5NW. Light refreshments and souvenirs are available. Due to the coronavirus outbreak it has been necessary to temporarily close the museum but check the website for the latest situation.

[www.boxted-airfield.com](http://www.boxted-airfield.com)

John Camp, Trustee and Curator of the Marauder Collection



Some of the uniforms in the new display cases. From left to right:  
Captain Jack Norton;  
Tech.Sgt. Eddie Kovalchik;  
Captain Harry Turner  
Lt.Col. Glenn Grau.  
(Author photo)

# The People of 1381

**T**he *People of 1381* is an innovative new project which launched in October 2019 with the aim of learning more than ever before about the lives of ordinary people caught up in the Peasants' Revolt, one of the largest popular revolts in English history. The project runs until October 2022 and is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Led by Professor Adrian Bell (Henley Business School, University of Reading), the multi-institution project team comprises: Professor Anne Curry (University of Southampton), Dr Helen Lacey (University of Oxford) and Professor Andrew Prescott (University of Glasgow), with Dr Herbert Eiden (Henley) and Dr Helen Killick (Oxford) as post-doctoral researchers. Big data techniques will be facilitated by Ian Waldock and Jason Sadler from GeoData at the University of Southampton.

Central to the project is the creation of a database to provide the first overview of the people, events and places involved in the revolt. This will bring together information from an unparalleled collection of medieval documents, including judicial and manorial records, the archives of central and local government, poll tax records and more, to reconstruct collective biographies of the people who took part in the rising.

The project will be a 'history from below', analysing the participation of social groups whose role has been little investigated, such as women, soldiers and household servants. It will use Geographic Information Systems to map the development and structure of the revolt, to identify differing levels of community protest and to examine how these fitted together.

Essex was central to the events of 1381: it is where the revolt started at the end of May 1381, and people from the county marched on London as well as instigating rebellion at home in many

local towns, village and manors in the following weeks. Dr Eiden is leading our research into the manorial records held in the Essex Record Office. He has already unearthed fascinating new information about unrest in Essex communities which was otherwise unrecorded. Dr Eiden has also been able to trace details of the lives of local people, identified as 'rebels' in central judicial and administrative documents, in local manorial documents. In some instances these individuals can be traced until their death was recorded, sometimes decades later, giving us a rough approximation for their age in 1381.

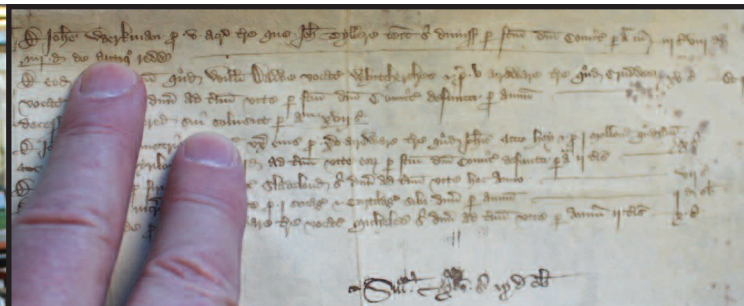
Public engagement is integral to the project: an interactive exhibition will visit locations closely linked to the events of 1381, including the Essex Record Office. There will also be a programme of events with schools in collaboration with the Historical Association and the Poetry Society.

Bringing together the records of the revolt offers a remarkable opportunity to explore the lives, aspirations and frustrations of those usually hidden from view, giving us insight into the motives and actions of the crowd rather than the elite. We believe this project can help foster a modern sense of community and engagement with the past, and the exhibition and education opportunities it offers will help encourage this.

For further information, please see the project website: [www.1381.online](http://www.1381.online).

The People of 1381 Project Team.

**Dr Herbert Eiden on a recent research trip to the Essex Record Office for *The People of 1381* project. In 1381 John Werkman was one of several people indicted by Henry English, sheriff of Cambridgeshire, for an attack on English's manor of Birdbrook. Here Dr Eiden is seen looking at an account roll from 1378-9 for Earls Colne (D/DPr 119) which shows (inset) Werkman holding 5 acres of land for which he paid 3s 8d per year. It is this sort of biographical information that will enable the project to enlarge on the history of the rebels. (Photos, N. Wiffen, 18/02/2020)**





# Missed Stebbing Document

**O**n the 1st October 2019 Stebbing and Local History Society was contacted by Dr Chris Thornton, Chairman of the Friends of Historic Essex (FHE), the charity that supports the Essex Record Office (ERO), about an important Stebbing item coming up for auction two days later at Peacock's auction house in Bedford. The item was a book, described on the title page as a 'Survey and Valuation of the Estate of The Earl of Essex in the Parishes of Stebbing, Saling, Raine & Bocking in the County of Essex' and dating to about 1795.

In 1922 the British Library acquired most of the muniments of the Capell family, Earls of Essex, from their estate at Cassiobury Park, Near Watford in Hertfordshire. The documents together are known as the Cassiobury Papers. They included collections of documents relating to their Essex estates, including those at Stebbing. These estates had been auctioned in 1901 and were therefore no longer in their possession. As well as the British Library other institutions also hold some of the manorial records relating to Stebbing, most notably the ERO and the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Library. Sadly, somehow the item up for auction escaped being deposited in a place where public access for all is possible.

The book is significant for Stebbing research as it captures in detail the Earl of Essex's holding here in c.1795. In addition it contains detailed maps of their Stebbing holdings in that year, a full 40 years before the current oldest set of similar maps contained in the Stebbing Tithe Award of 1838-9.

The FHE and the ERO indicated that they intended to attempt to purchase the book for deposit in its rightful place, the ERO. They keep a fund for purchasing such items and both parties were prepared to put money in. They wanted to know whether the SLHS would put some money in too. Within 24 hours the committee had agreed to commit £200 plus another £200 from a couple of the committee members. There was no time to seek funding from other individuals. It was felt that the £1,200 available for its purchase would be enough to acquire it given the auction house's estimate of £400 - £600.

At the auction itself it didn't take long for the bids to exceed not only the top auction estimate but also the maximum fund available to our consortium. In fact at least two other bidders must still have been in play when we dropped out (we were absentee bidders) as the item ultimately sold for £1,400 plus fees. One of the reasons why the final sum realised was higher than it might have been was simply because of the high quality of the calligraphy throughout the survey – see image of the title page. As the auction house indicated in the lot details, it was 'almost a work of art'. Luckily one of our members heroically made the trek to Bedford at short notice to view the item (although it wasn't even a viewing session) and it is because of this visit that we at least salvaged images of some of the pages relating to Stebbing although sadly not all of them.

After the auction the society immediately contacted the auction house asking them to pass on a message to the purchaser requesting that they get in touch with us. It was hoped that the buyer would be prepared to let us take a digital copy, for a fee of course, as to us the content of the book is worth much more than the physical book itself. The buyer didn't respond! If anyone knows the whereabouts of it we'd love to hear from you.

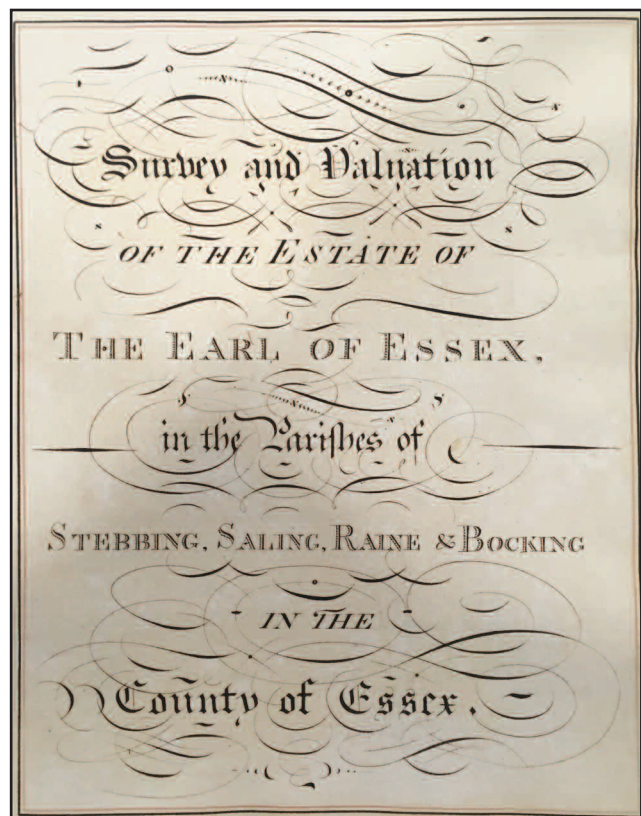
This has probably been the single most important historical Stebbing item to come on the open market since the Society's foundation in 1995 and its loss has been a chastening experience. We have since set up online alerts so that auction lots containing the word 'Stebbing' will result in the committee receiving an email. We will also keep an eye out for it being sold elsewhere. In addition at our November meeting it was discussed that should something equally important ever come up again then it is essential to know if there are any Stebbing 'angels' who might be prepared to pledge funds at short notice.

Most importantly the SLHS would like to thank Dr Chris Thornton of FHE and Richard Anderson of ERO itself for getting in touch with us in the first place, for leading the bid and for being prepared to contribute significant monies towards its purchase.

Graham Jolliffe

[stebbinglhs.wordpress.com](http://stebbinglhs.wordpress.com)

Title Page of the Survey



# Canvey Community Archive:

## what are we all about?

**T**he Canvey Community Archive group was formed in 2006 in partnership with Essex County Council Libraries, the Essex Record Office, East of England Museums, and the Libraries and Archives Council. It is run by the people of Canvey and takes the form of an internet site, so that the content is available from home computers, mobile phones, tablets and the People's Network in Libraries around Essex.

Our aim is to gather Canvey residents' memories as well as copying photographs and other documents relating to the history of the Island. This happens at our regular presence at the Canvey Library on the second Saturday of each month. So, the Archive isn't just an anonymous on-line site, it has a human face too (and if you catch it on a good day it might even smile)!

The website went live in 2008 with the help of a National Lottery Grant and was upgraded in 2019 to keep up with today's tech advances. The Archive has moved forward quite a bit during the last few years. The committee of seven volunteers agreed early in 2014 that the Archive's profile needed raising. For this we needed money, so we applied for a Heritage Lottery Fund Grant and gratefully received a cheque for just under £5,000. This money meant that we could replace the couple of bits of equipment that the Archive had, which were by then out-dated and temperamental. The new laptops, projector and audio equipment we bought have all helped to give our presentations a nice professional look because giving talks to community groups on the Island and beyond is a good way of bringing Canvey history to a wider audience. The range of topics covered is continuing to expand – please check our website.

Another way of raising the Archive's profile was by setting up regular meetings in Canvey's War Memorial Hall. These take place every other month and have included speakers from local groups, for example, Coast Watch, the Sea Scouts and the Essex Record Office. The Archive sought to develop other lines of interest too, such as research into where some of the 1953 Flood victims were buried. This led to a memorial plaque being put at Jotman's Cemetery in Benfleet in recognition of these people.

In 1944 there was a tragic collision of two B17 American Flying Fortresses off the Island's coast. The Archive felt that this should be properly recognised. With the help of donations from our Town Council and other local groups we put an information board and two memorial benches on the sea wall at the bottom of Beveland Road. This was completed not just to make Islanders aware of what had happened but also to provide a focal point for the air crews' families and one surviving crew member. We followed this up with a commemoration service in 2019 on the 75th anniversary of the collision.

The above shows that the Archive is very much pro-active in keeping Canvey's history highlighted. However, there are also times when interesting things just drop into our laps! A good example of this happened in 2017 when we were approached by SEECA (South East Essex Community Archives) to ask if we'd like to help rescue thousands of photos, slides and press cuttings from the Echo Newspaper building which was going to be demolished. We came away with boxes and boxes of material relating to Canvey between the 1960s and 1990s. We felt like all our Christmases had come at once! It then took Janet Penn, our online editor two years just to get all the photos on our website, making them available to all, rather than being discarded in a skip. Sorting through the rest of the material is an ongoing project.

In 2018 we had another very interesting project concerning the now redundant Convent on Canvey Island. We were contacted by Sister Barbara from the Institute of Our Lady of Mercy to see if we could help to identify the nuns and lay people buried in the tiny graveyard in the Convent's grounds. I'm pleased to say, that, after painstaking research online and a visit to Douai Abbey near Reading, where the convent's records were archived, all the nuns could be identified. Now the two memorials, which will be erected later this year on their new burial site, will have their correct birth names and dates.

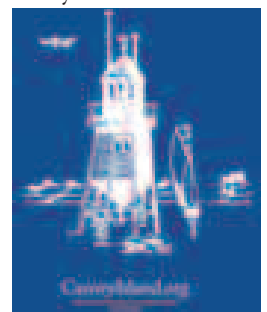
And, just when we thought life couldn't get any more interesting, we were invited to take part in the *Tides of Tendring* project last year. This was centred on Jaywick's Martello Tower where we set up an exhibition about the 1953 Flood and in the following week presented a talk about the same subject.

We have become the go to website regarding Canvey history for all sorts of groups: worldwide, national and local. There is good cooperation too between all the other local community archive websites, museums, volunteer groups and Town and Borough Councils. We're also proud to have the support of community minded people such as Ray Howard MBE and Rebecca Harris MP.

New recruits to the Canvey Community Archive are always welcome, so if you're interested please contact us via our website. You can also ask about us or visit us in Canvey Library.

Janet Walden

[canveyisland.org](http://canveyisland.org)





# Stan Newens – 90 years old and 70 years a member of the Labour Party

I was proud to host the 90th birthday celebration for Stan at the Houses of Parliament, he is a wonderful man with a brilliant mind and a great socialist. I've known Stan since 1970 when he was firstly a MP for Epping and later for Harlow and the European Parliament. He is a wonderful Labour historian and political thinker and inspiration to us all. His friends and family gathered in parliament to thank him for his past 70 years of membership of the Labour Party including the vital work he continues to do. Harlow's last parliamentary candidate Laura McAlpine also paid tribute to Stan and I would like to thank her as well as Sandra and the rest of Stan's family for the support you have given him over the years. It is my honour to call Stan a friend and I look forward to future challenges with Stan because there is still a lot of work to do!

Jeremy Corbyn MP

**Top right. Stan Newens and Jeremy Corbyn MP at the party organised to mark the milestone of 70 years membership of the Labour Party.**

**Right. Right. Stan with Jeremy and current Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Harlow, Laura McAlpine.**

**Below. Stan's family, friends and colleagues who joined him to celebrate his double anniversaries – 90 years old and 70 years a member of the Labour Party.**

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# Stan Newens: an appreciation

When our editor, Neil Wiffen, invited me to write an appreciation of Arthur Stanley Newens, better known to us all as Stan, I immediately accepted. It is an honour to make this contribution to such a distinguished author, historian, lecturer and politician in his 90th year. He still maintains a full diary and regularly attends many meetings, conferences, symposia and other events at which he actively participates and long may he continue to do so.

Stan was born in Bethnal Green in 1930 and moved to North Weald in 1939. He was educated at Buckhurst Hill County High School and University College London where he took a degree in history and later taught history in London schools.<sup>1</sup> He has always maintained a great interest in many aspects of history, including family, local and industrial history. For some years he has held the distinction of being the earliest surviving researcher to use the Essex Record Office having first visited it way back in 1947. He has remained a regular user ever since and is a long standing member of the Friends of Historic Essex, which supports the good work of the Record Office.

I first met Stan during the late 1980s when he attended Essex History Fairs, often accompanied by his son, Thomas. He regularly attended meetings and symposia arranged by the former Essex Archaeological and Historical Congress, until it was absorbed into the Essex Society for Archaeology and History. He has been a member of the Society since 1974, was elected to its council in 2002, president from 2005 to 2008 and is currently a vice president. He continues to attend council meetings and serves on two committees namely the Libraries and Archives Committee and the Publications and Research Committee, actively participating in both. He has represented the Society on the Editorial Board of *Essex Journal* since 2006 and therefore during the last 14 years I have worked closely with him. He has always been a great ambassador and supporter of *Essex Journal*, writing many articles<sup>2</sup> over ten book reviews, a couple of obituaries, as well as being a valued member of the Editorial Board.<sup>3</sup>

He is the author of many historical and political books including:

*A History of North Weald Bassett and its People* (1985)

*A Short History of London Co-op Political Committee* (1988)

*Leah Manning*, with co-author Ron Bill (1991)

*A Brief History of 100 years of the Labour Party in the Eastern Region* (2000)

*Arthur Morrison* (2008)<sup>4</sup>

and his autobiography: *In Quest of a Fairer Society: My Life and Politics* (2013)

Stan was elected as Member of Parliament for Epping at the 1964 General Election and that year

he campaigned against the demolition of Moreton post mill, which had distinctive features of construction, no longer represented in Britain. Sadly his representations were not successful and the mill was destroyed.<sup>5</sup> However his efforts resulted in a lifelong interest in the preservation and history of Essex mills and it is therefore appropriate that one article in this special issue is about an Essex mill. He has a particular interest in industrial history and heritage, being a member of Essex Industrial Archaeology Group, which now incorporates Essex Mills Group. As an MP he represented Epping until 1970; Harlow from 1974 to 1983 and from 1984 until 1999 he was Member of the European Parliament for London Central. Since retiring as an MEP, his contribution to various aspects of history has been enormous and greatly appreciated by the numerous organisations he serves.

Stan has lived in Harlow since 1967 where he has been chairman of Harlow Civic Society and chairman of the Gibberd Garden Trust. He became a member of Waltham Abbey Historical Society in 1970 and its president since 1999.<sup>6</sup> He is vice president of the Socialist History Society and president of the North Weald Preservation Society. He has been a trustee of the Victoria County History of Essex Trust for over 20 years and continues in this position. In connection with the organisations he is associated with, he is not merely a figurehead, but is an active and hardworking member, who attends as many meetings as he can. His commitment is enormous and greatly appreciated. I hope he remains a familiar face on the Essex and East London history scene for a long time to come.

Adrian Corder-Birch

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# A Celtic-Roman Mystery: The Name *Othona*

by

Andrew Breeze

**O**thona is the supposed name of the Roman fortress near Bradwell-on-Sea, by the Blackwater Estuary (Figs 1 & 2). This Fort of the Saxon Shore (TM 0308), two miles from the village, is in a remote place; and place-name scholars have been remote from explaining what *Othona* means. Fresh analysis may yet provide an answer, as with many things.

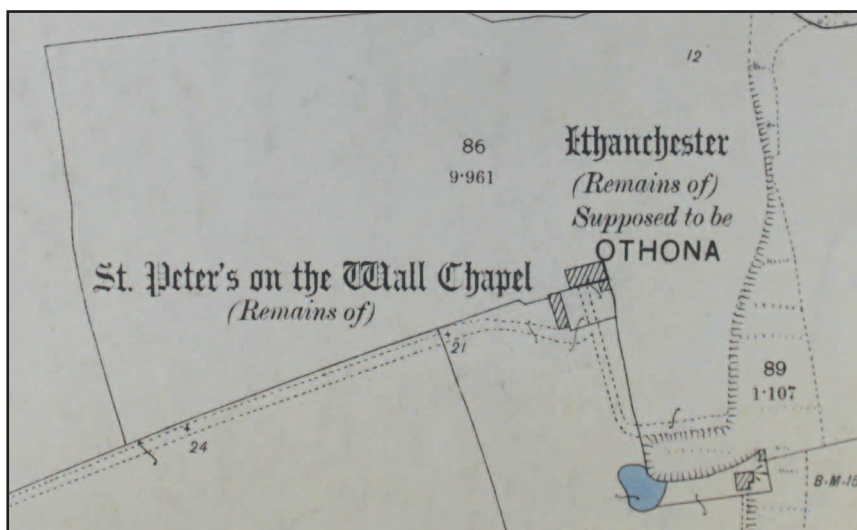
*Othona* has a double fame. The original stronghold protected the Roman settlements of Colchester and Chelmsford against attack from the sea; in the seventh century the local king gave the site to St Cedd for use as a monastery. Its church (as one knows) stands to this day. Bede, mentioning the grant in book three of his *Ecclesiastical History*, called the place *Ythancaestir*, the second element being the ‘chester’ of many former Roman cities in England, like Chester or Colchester. But the relation of *Ythan-* to *Othona* has remained obscure, even though a link between monastery-name and fortress-name was proposed by William Camden (1551–1623) over four centuries ago.<sup>1</sup>

The problem is as follows. *Othona* is known from one source only, *Notitia Dignitatum* (‘Register of Offices’), compiled in about 400 CE. Yet the form corresponds to nothing in British, the Celtic language (ancestor to modern Welsh) spoken in Roman Britain, one difficulty being that British had no *th* sound. Although scholars have assumed scribal error, their solutions lack compulsion. One emendation has, however, not been considered. It is this. *Oth-* in the manuscripts may be a corruption of British *oct-*, which in Welsh became *oeth*.<sup>2</sup> Emendation of ‘*Othona*’ to *Octona* has three advantages: first, *c* and *t* in early medieval script are easily confused; second, Welsh *oeth* actually means something; third, what it means suits the site of ‘*Othona*’, because it has the sense ‘what is difficult to achieve or obtain; difficulty, wonder’. If one adds to these the definition ‘a place hard to reach’, it describes Bradwell-on-the-Wall very well. People in Essex know that the place is far from anywhere. So did others, as we shall see.

An interpretation involving ‘difficulty of access’ has parallels. Scottish instances include Loch Arklet (NN 3709), east of Loch Lomond, called after the *aircleat-had* or ‘slope difficult to climb’ above it, and Ben Aigan (NJ 3048), nine miles south of Elgin and related to Gaelic *éiginn* ‘difficulty’, the steep hill, the hill that was hard to ascend.<sup>3</sup> In this paper, we therefore set out previous accounts of ‘*Othona*’ (or ‘*Octona*’), together with terms related to British *octo-*, including Middle Welsh *anoeth* ‘wonder, something difficult to find’, Cornish *aneth* ‘wonder’, Welsh *cyfoeth* ‘wealth’, and (most simply) *oeth* ‘something difficult to reach, obtain, or do; wonder’. We deal as well with Bede’s *Ythancaestir* and its problematic link with ‘*Othona*’. If the original form was *Octona* and not anything else, obstacles to the understanding of *Ythancaestir* may vanish at once.

We start with Welsh *oeth* and its intensive form *anoeth*, both long obsolete. Sir Ifor Williams (1881–1965), defining their meaning as ‘wonderful’ or ‘hard to attain’, quoted an early bard on how the capture of some castles would be an *anoeth*.<sup>4</sup> As for *Ythancaestir*, the Swedish scholar Ekwall proposed a drastic solution. He doubted any connection between ‘*Othona*’ and *Ythancaestir* (later attested as Domesday Book’s *Effecestra*). He regarded *Ythan-* instead as an Old English personal name, although admitting that no such name was recorded.<sup>5</sup> The weakness of his case is obvious, especially when one recalls how the names of other coastal forts certainly passed from British to English, as with *Branodunum* (Brancaster) in Norfolk, or *Regulbium* (Reculver) and *Rutupiae* (Richborough) in Kent. The Saxons knew what these strongholds were called, isolation or not.

1. An extract from the 2nd Edition 25-inch OS map, 56-1, of 1895 showing the location of *Othona* and St Peter’s Chapel. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office)



That in mind, we turn to the University of Wales dictionary and its entries for *anoeth*, *cyfoeth*, and *oeth*. The second, still the Welsh for ‘wealth, riches’, once meant ‘power, authority’ as well. It derives from reconstructed *com-okto-*, where the prefix has an emphatic force, denoting something especially difficult to get. Money and power were hard to come by, then as now. As for the suffix *-on(a)*, it is standard in derivative nouns, examples including the Welsh river-name *leithon* ‘chattering one’ from *iaith* ‘language’, the personal name *Mabon* ‘youthful one’ from *mab* ‘boy’, or Middle Welsh *guron* ‘hero’ from *gur* ‘man’; compare also *Rhiannon* ‘great queen’ in the *Mabinogion* or Gaulish *Matrona* ‘great mother’ (=the river Marne, near Paris).<sup>6</sup> On the basis of the last, the suffix of *Octona* suggests an interpretation ‘great inaccessible place’ or ‘great wilderness’, the fort taking its name from the region.

How Celtic *Oct-* changed to Old Welsh *Oith-* and then modern *Oeth* was set out by Kenneth Jackson (1909–91) of Edinburgh. In Common Celtic the *k* of Indo-European *kt* became *ch*, pronounced as in Scottish *loch* or German *doch*. In British–Latin sources the resulting *cht* is usually spelt *ct*, although *xt* also occurs. British *-cht-* gave *-ith-* (where *i* is a semi-vowel) in the late sixth century. Elsewhere and quite separately Jackson discussed the difficulties of ‘Othona’, where he doubted the emended reading ‘Ottona’ proposed by Max Förster of Munich. He yet saw the form as borrowed by English in the later sixth century, pointing out that the fort (in a distant part of Essex) was not ‘readily approachable to those coming by land’ and was long derelict when the English settled nearby after about 550.<sup>7</sup> Jackson later gave ‘Othona’ as a Roman spelling of unrecorded British ‘Ottona’, but could provide no meaning for it, adding that ‘the history of the name is still far from clear’.<sup>8</sup>

Emendation to *Octona* did not occur to him. The relative emptiness of Roman Essex, except near Colchester and the highways, is obvious from an archaeological map. Finds are unknown around Bradwell, despite the military road running from its west gate.<sup>9</sup>

By now, most readers will have had enough of philology. For the remainder, some further comments on Celtic and Old English, on how hypothetical British *Ochtona* or *Octona* ultimately gave Bede’s *Ythan(caestir)*. We know that, with loss of British terminations in the post-Roman period, *Oc(h)tona* would become an unrecorded *Oithon*. Why, then, does Bede have *Ythan-* (treated as an *n*-declension noun) and not *Oithan-*? Campbell’s grammar shows that Bede’s Northumbrian dialect could cope with *oi*, as with the name of the heathen priest *Coifi* (whose dramatic conversion to Christianity is described by Bede). The answer seems to lie in Bede’s sources, many of them from Canterbury. In the Old English dialect of Kent, there was no diphthong *oi* as there was in Old Northumbrian. Speakers of Old Kentish would therefore use as a substitute the sound closest to it, the front vowel *y*. Because Bede obtained much of his information from Canterbury sources, he may have found *Ythancaestir* there and not ‘Oithancaestir’. Or (which comes to the same thing), it represented its pronunciation in the Old English dialect of Essex, which resembled that of Kent but is less well recorded. Bede the Northumbrian reproduced either a Kenticism or an ‘Essexism’. There is other evidence for the hypothesis that speakers of Kentish (and Essex) dialect could not pronounce Late British *oi* and so replaced it with *y*. By the tenth century the *y* of early Old Kentish had been raised to *e*.<sup>10</sup> The change occurred in Essex (and beyond), where we get place-names like *Mell* House and (near Colchester) Old *Heath* for

‘mill’ and ‘hythe’ (=‘harbour’) elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> Hence the *Effecestra* of Domesday Book, where the initial vowel, developing in exactly the way expected in Kent and Essex alike, would indicate Bede’s *Ythancaestir* as a Kenticism or Essexism.

Leaving philology for a while, we look again at Bradwell’s location. It is well described in the essay ‘Ythancaestir on the North Sea’ by the poet and critic Geoffrey Grigson (1905–85), who noticed the ‘straight, muddy, rutty extent of the Roman road’ driving out to what in Roman times was a site of ‘deadly isolation’ beyond the ‘dull black forests which then occupied the London Clay’, the garrison’s sole companions being ‘a few barbarian Celts’ who were fishermen or ‘salt-makers squatting along the soft shores of the Blackwater’.<sup>12</sup> Yet this stronghold against attack by sea was also supplied by sea. It was easier to reach by water than by land. An insight on its garrison is supplied by finds of fourth-century Romano-Saxon pottery, suggesting the presence of Germanic warriors in Roman pay.<sup>13</sup> The surprising implication of *Ythancaestir* and not ‘Ohtancaestir’ is, nevertheless, that the name in English comes not from these German migrants, but was learnt from local Britons two centuries later, when Anglo-Saxons began colonizing the region after about 550.

Others remark on how far Bradwell is from everywhere. Pevsner, giving information on the fort (established in the late third century), commented as well on St Peter’s Church as almost ‘completely alone’ and ‘exposed to the east winds of the North Sea, a moving sight’.<sup>14</sup> A further map reveals Essex as almost as poor in finds for the Anglo-Saxons as it is for the Romans.<sup>15</sup> Sir Frank Stenton reinforces this impression of emptiness, calling St Peter’s-at-the-Wall ‘a desolate site’.<sup>16</sup>

A digression. If, as argued here, *Octona* mean ‘place hard



to get to', it has unexpected modern equivalents. Up and down England are fields with names like America, Babylon, Botany Bay, Calais, Canaan, Isle of Elba, Isles of Scilly, Jerusalem, Klondyke, New South Wales, Nova Scotia, South America, South Carolina, or Van Diemen's Land. All these are humorous or sardonic references to land a long way from farm or village.<sup>17</sup> Hours of trudging led to these names in recent centuries. Something similar may have happened long ago.

On that one notes how the Middle Welsh common noun *oeth* 'difficulty, wonder' also occurs in a place-name. The Welsh triads and *Mabinogion* tale of Culhwch and Olwen mention *Caer Oeth* 'Fort Difficulty', which is not a specified place, but a half-forgotten aspect of Celtic tradition. (It is unlikely to preserve a Welsh memory of the Bradwell defences. If it did, it would be unique amongst the Saxon Shore forts.) It is not the only toponym relevant here. *Octodurum* was a Celtic stronghold by the town of Martigny, high up in the Rhône valley, Switzerland.<sup>18</sup> Its name means 'secluded fort, remote fortress' and Caesar actually wrote in book two of his *Gallic War* that it was 'situated in a rather narrow valley and completely surrounded by very high mountains'. In another context, the late Margaret Gelling mentioned 'Othona' / *Ythancaestir* with other fortresses (Reculver, Richborough, Dover, Lympne) as showing how British-Latin toponyms were 'known in the late Roman period both to Saxon pirates and to Germanic defenders', although with no word on phonological difficulties for the first.<sup>19</sup>

Those difficulties were not ignored by Rivet and Smith in an essential work of reference. Its value is shown by references to Ptolemy's *Octodurum*, an unlocated tribal capital (with Celtic *duro-* 'stronghold') near (or at?) Zamora in north-west

Spain, and to Caesar's *Octodurum* in Switzerland. Rivet and Smith nevertheless failed to connect them with 'Othona', which they called 'very problematic', citing an intricate derivation by Max Förster of *Ythan-* as from an emended 'Otona', together with Jackson's criticism on its lack of an etymology; they observed too how memories of Otho, who ruled in 69 CE ('the year of four emperors'), might produce the corrupt form 'Othona'.<sup>20</sup> The English would also hardly learn a British toponym in its Latin form, especially so late in the settlement period. Yet it is the evidence of *Octodurum* 'secluded fort' from Spain and Switzerland that is telling. It guides us towards a solution on 'Othona'.

Before that, some further comments from history and linguistics. Peter Salway summarizes research on the Saxon Shore by Stephen Johnson, who regarded most of its forts (Bradwell's included) as built between 276 and 285 to counter piracy in the Channel and North Sea.<sup>21</sup> The editor of the thirteenth-century *Black Book of Carmarthen* leaves open whether its 'war band of Oeth and Anoeth' alludes to two warlords or two places.<sup>22</sup> Present arguments imply the latter, the forms being effectively unknown as personal names. There is an updated account of the relation of Welsh *cyfoeth* 'riches, wealth' to Old Irish *cumachtae* 'power'.<sup>23</sup> In a popular book, 'Othona' is correctly described as 'obscure'.<sup>24</sup> There are also precise statements on the community at *Ythancaestir* and their church, built in Kentish style.<sup>25</sup> If the place was established under Canterbury's aegis, no surprise if *Ythancaestir* displayed Old Kentish symptoms. The mysterious *Caer Oeth* and *Caer Anoeth* in the eleventh-century *Mabinogion* tale of Culhwch are cited in the context of the Triads and the Black Book poem.<sup>26</sup> We do not know where they were. But they are evidence for *oeth* in a toponym. We may recall that. The unique reference in *Notitia*

*Dignitatum* to 'Othona' figures in a useful handbook, also listing the forts at Dover, Lympne, Brancaster, Burgh Castle, Reculver, Richborough, Pevensey, and Portchester.<sup>27</sup>

At the turn of the century 'Othona' figured in a paper published by this journal.<sup>28</sup> It was further studied by Professor Richard Coates, who proposed a link with Welsh *eidion* 'ox', the sense being 'ox-place'. Assuming that *\*Otona* (where the asterisk indicates a reconstructed form, unattested in surviving records) was known to Anglo-Saxon pirates and mercenaries from the fifth century, he dismissed Jackson's view that the borrowing was made not then, but after the middle of the sixth. He then set out a history of development from British *\*Otona*. The *th* of written *Othona* is regarded as a corruption or inverse spelling following a Continental pronunciation [ts]. As for Old English *Ythan*, this is explained from fifth-century *\*Ytton* from *\*Otona*.<sup>29</sup>

These processes are complex; and complexity is a disadvantage. There are four objections. First, derivation from *\*Otona* and not *\*Oijona* has the advantage of simplicity as regards both written *Othona* and Old English *Ythancaestir*. Second, it is supported by the toponym *Octodurum* (as also *Caer Oeth*); *eidion*, in contrast, seems unknown in place-names (unlike, say, Welsh *bu* 'cow' in the 'cow-pasture' of *Builth Wells*, Powys). Third, it accords in Jackson's comments on the remoteness of this fort, constructed when the Essex lowlands, heavy with boulder-clay, had much forest and were hard to traverse. Fourth, it is doubtful in the extreme whether the Bradwell region was then known for cattle-rearing. Fish, salt, or timber might be more to the point. The Cambridge dictionary makes no reference to Coates's hypothesis.<sup>30</sup>

As for Continental Celtic *Octodurum*, this has gained some attention. Eugenio Luján thinks



2. Extract from Saxton's map of 1576 shows extensive woodland even then in Dengie and Maldon hundreds. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office, MAP/CM/1/1)

that the instance in north-west Spain 'may or may not' be corrupt, and that we should (after the Antonine Itinerary and Ravenna Cosmography) read *Ocelodurum*, related to *Ocelon* 'headland', Ptolemy's term for Spurn Head, Yorkshire.<sup>31</sup> This may be so; but we have in any case the Swiss *Octodurum* from Caesar's *Gallic War*, where the text is sounder. However, Ptolemy's *Octapitarum Promontorium* or St David's Head in West Wales is here misleading. Professor Sims-Williams suggests emendation to *Ocelopitarum* 'dangerous headland', which makes excellent sense.<sup>32</sup> The Pembrokeshire coast is notorious for shipwrecks. For all that, he does not consider for any of these or for Balkan *Octabon* (now, however, understood as Latin *Ad Octavum* and so irrelevant) a link with Welsh *oeth*.<sup>33</sup> Many places referred to

here can be found in John Koch's archaeological atlas.<sup>34</sup>

As we near the end of this article, it is cheering to discover in the work of others something close to what is proposed here. Besides rejection of *Octabon* (a Belgrade suburb) as being *Ad Octavum* and hence non-Celtic, we again encounter *Octodurum* or Martigny, between Lake Geneva and the Great St Bernard Pass. It is considered with three explanations from a CD-ROM by Graham Isaac for its first element: 'eight'; 'difficult to capture'; and 'cold'.<sup>35</sup> The first can be dismissed. The proposed 'eight-sided fort' or 'fort with eight gates' has no parallel. A fort with eight gates would also be an absurdity. A gate is a point of insecurity; eight of them would be a gift to attackers. As regards the third, coldness is not unknown in Switzerland, and the Old Irish *ócht* 'cold' quoted

here lacks Celtic cognates outside Irish. That leaves the sense 'difficult'. All strongholds being designed to resist capture, Isaac's interpretation 'difficult to take' must be rejected. The sense will be 'fortress hard to reach, remote fort', which is apt for Martigny, over 1,500 feet above sea level, and with Caesar himself (possessing a soldierly eye for terrain) remarking how it is 'situated in a rather narrow valley and completely surrounded by very high mountains'. Welsh *Oeth*, thought perhaps a personal name and not a toponym, is now discussed in a footnote.<sup>36</sup>

*Octodurum* or Martigny brings us to a close. Essex and Switzerland have little in common, except in having lonely and uninhabited regions. On this basis we can emend meaningless 'Othona' to *Octona*. Bede's *Ythancaestir* will, in turn, represent in the Old English of Kent or



Essex a Late British *\*Oithon* from British *\*Octona* or *\*Ochtona* 'great inaccessible place, secluded place, remote place, place hard to get to'. It was a big wilderness. In their fortress by the grey North Sea, with fogs or cold winds and boredom and perennial damp, Roman soldiers must have longed for leave in Colchester with its bars and girls. At the same desolation there later came Saxon monks, with their hymns and manuscripts and candles and the power of a new religion. By their time the fort was effectively useless for any military purpose. Bede's accounts of Bradwell and Burgh Castle and *Civitas Domnuc* (not Dunwich but the vanished Walton Castle, Felixstowe) and Reculver show old fortifications as home to missionaries, sometimes after a formal grant by the local king. Nobody else wanted them.

Finally, to Roman legionaries and Anglo-Saxon priests can be added technicians of the modern age, for Bradwell also has a 'massive uncompromising mid-twentieth-century nuclear power station'.<sup>37</sup> The reasons for its siting are obvious. Ten miles from Colchester, less than 20 miles from Chelmsford and Southend, it is yet far from any built-up area, occupies low-grade agricultural land, and has access to unlimited supplies of water for cooling. As Britain will always need energy, these advantages will remain for new installations in the twenty-first century and beyond. In short, interpretation of 'Othona' as *Octona* 'great remote place, extensive wilderness, big desolate location' has implications even in the atomic age, where the empty landscape at Bradwell still has uses, because nobody wants to live near a nuclear power station.

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## The Author

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# The mystery of the missing Lady Chapel

by

Lawrence Greenall & Steve Miller

**T**wo members of Waltham Abbey Historical Society (WAHS) report on their survey of Waltham Abbey church in south-west Essex (Fig 1, cover illustration), seeking evidence of a Lady Chapel within its western facade, according to fourteenth century documents at the Essex Record Office (ERO).

## **Waltham Abbey: Town and Church**

The Town of Waltham Abbey lies to the west of Epping Forest, on the eastern bank of the river Lea, the border between Essex and Hertfordshire. Historically it is a market town named after the Abbey of Waltham, which was itself named after the original settlement's name of just *Waltham*.

The abbey was built in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries as an eastern extension to an earlier Romanesque church, which lost its transept, central tower and apse in the process. The Romanesque nave and a later south chapel survived the Dissolution, and became the parish church of the Holy Cross and St Lawrence.<sup>1</sup>

The church's western end has gone through three main phases (Fig 2). It was initially built with twin western towers, probably not unlike those at Worksop Priory in Notts. In c.1300, they were replaced by a Decorated Gothic screen-type facade, having three sections or bays between four turrets rising above them. Then, in the 1550s a single west tower was built in front of that facade, effectively destroying its central bay. Both side bays of the c.1300 facade still exist, as the west walls of the church's north and south aisles.

Screen-type facades supposedly have no towers – yet there is compelling evidence at ERO for a chapel within Waltham's 'screen' in the fourteenth century, which implies a tower-like feature.

The way that the 1550s tower was married internally to the old facade was, not to mince words, a bodge-up. The baffling arrangement of stairs and passages resembles a medieval Spaghetti Junction more than anything else (Fig 3)! Remnants of all three phases of the western end jostle with each other for attention. Very briefly, a spiral staircase leads up to crooked passages, steep flights of stairs, further spiral stairwells with heavily worn steps, and blocked doorways at odd angles. During a recent visit, the architectural historian Dr James Bettley described it as 'perplexing' and that no other Essex church is anywhere near as complicated in this regard.

## **Lady Chapels: their form and function**

Chapels dedicated to Mary take a great many forms, obviously varying by region and period around the world, but in medieval Britain there were two main developments.

The first had its origins with the birth of Marian worship in the second century Middle-Eastern church. Of all the saints who could be prayed to, Mary held a special status. As the mother of Jesus, she was deemed to rank higher than all other created beings including saints, and the term *hyperdulia* was coined for her veneration. Churches dedicated to various saints began to include sacred spaces specially dedicated to Mary, which were placed as far east as possible to reflect her status. Gradually, more sacred spaces were added either side of the Marian one, each of which would be dedicated to a particular saint. Priests would say preliminary prayers at the side altars before fully celebrating Mass for the church's congregation at its main altar.

The practice of adding several secondary chapels to a church spread to the early medieval European church, as did its central chapel, east of the main altar, being dedicated to Mary. Because of the implied power that supplications made to her could have, this chapel was generally only for the use of priests.

Secondary chapels were often circular or semi-circular, because the circle was seen as the only geometric shape not devised by human hands. In the Middle East, whole churches were often circular, but western churches often married a rectangular basilica or meeting hall in the Roman style, with a semi-circular eastern sanctuary dotted with radiating circular chapels.

After the Conquest, the Normans introduced rounded east ends to Britain in their first flush of church building here, but the already popular British custom of square-ended chancels eventually prevailed when round-ended churches gradually got rebuilt with squared ends in later centuries. Waltham is a good case in point: its first, twin-towered phase had a semicircular eastern end, to which three radiating round chapels were added in the 1120s.<sup>2</sup> But only half a century later, this was demolished to allow the great Abbey of Waltham to be butted up against the church's transept, and its own eastern end was squared off in the British manner.

One of those three round chapels at Waltham, whilst we have no proof, was probably dedicated to Mary; however it was most likely one of the side chapels; the most easterly chapel almost certainly housed the Holy Cross of Waltham. It is worth noting that in terms of saintly hierarchy, the Holy Cross had its own special relationship with Jesus for obvious reasons, and as



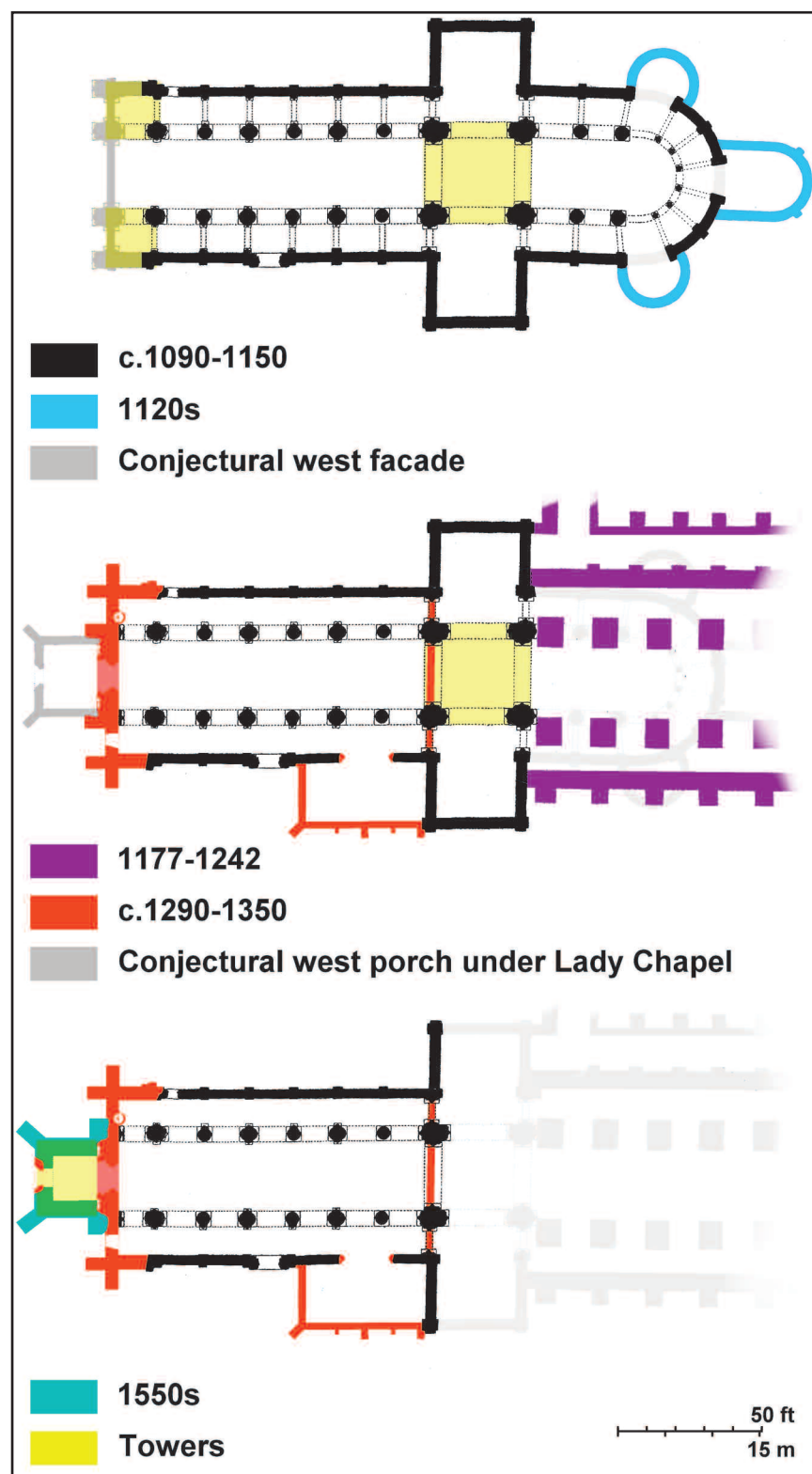
a focus of devotional prayer it vied with Mary for status over the various saints, but it never achieved the popularity in Britain that she did. So Waltham may be a rare example of Mary's chapel not getting pole position in a church. Nevertheless, the loss of her chapel when the abbey arrived could well have prompted the parishioners to petition for a replacement when the opportunity arose.

During the high medieval period in Britain, these chapels dedicated to Mary were being rebuilt with squared-off ends by the patrons of the higher-status churches, the royalty and arch-bishops. They used their power to make eastern Marian chapels ever larger and more opulent, often consuming the whole eastern arm of the church, as they tried to outdo each other in appealing to Mary to confirm their own anointed status on earth.

Kings also frequently built memorials full of Marian symbolism to their Royal queens and queen mothers, a prime example being the Eleanor Crosses. Mary gives a male-focussed religion its indispensable female balance; being so close to God the Father she has his ear, just as our own mothers do with our fathers when we've been arguing with our brothers.

These grand, elaborate rebuilds received the dignified title of Lady Chapels, and became the first of the two forms of Lady Chapel in our period of interest.

The second form came about as a result of a change in religious practice decreed by the Roman church, giving rise to the saying of masses for the dead to aid their journey into Heaven. The lesser nobility and manorial lords would build small private chapels inside the nave or aisles of a church but not its sanctuary, which were generally only big enough to accommodate a couple of priests and the patron's tomb. Their patrons then bequeathed perpetual incomes, mostly in the form of land, to pay for priests to



2. Plans showing the development of Waltham church from c.1090 to the 1550s. (The authors)

say masses for them forever, and for candles to be kept continually lit at their chapels' altars, until the Day of Judgement.

This priestly recitation of masses gave these chapels the name of Chantry Chapels. They could be dedicated to any saint, though once again Mary was

by far the most popular choice. Chantry chapels were quite out of reach for ordinary people, but sometimes wealthy parishes, such as those with chartered markets such as Waltham, would form a guild together and build their own chantry chapel in their parish church.



3. The facade's inner passage, looking south.  
(L. Greenall, 28/10/2015)

Both types of Lady Chapel were originally exclusive and private, as can be seen, for example with the numerous chantry chapels still standing in Winchester Cathedral. But as the more wealthy patrons lavished more and more opulence onto them, their size began to increase with their visual status. Even guild chapels often only accommodated a priest or two, who acted as representatives of the people, but sometimes they also included a small congregational area.

This also happened with the earlier round chapels, as can be seen at Norwich Cathedral. The two flanking chapels each consist of two overlapping circles in plan, being a sanctuary and a tiny nave.

As both types of chapel grew in size they gradually became large open spaces, a valuable commodity which was soon made use of. Lady Chapels thus gradually gained a social function and it is now accepted that a Lady Chapel can accommodate a small congregation.

### Waltham's supposed Lady Chapel

In the early fourteenth century, a two-storey chapel was added to the parish church, in the corner between the south aisle and the south transept. Although the transept has gone, the chapel still stands. It is a splendid structure not without the stateliness of Marian chantry chapels, and bears comparison with them.

All the post-Dissolution histories of the church assumed until very recently that it was a Lady Chapel before the Dissolution. The revealing of a medieval Day of Judgement painting in it when the false ceiling hiding it was removed in 1876 did not raise questions. Even the discovery of some fourteenth century deeds,<sup>3</sup> showing that the parish then had two guilds dedicated to the Holy Sepulchre and to the Virgin Mary, did not prompt comparison with the Doom painting's theme – the chapel's original dedication remained unchallenged.

Doubts finally began to be raised in the 1980s, in publications by the local historian Dinah Dean. Others began to concur, and it is now accepted that this south chapel was maintained by the sepulchral guild. A recent publication<sup>4</sup> has even established that it wasn't thought to be a Lady Chapel until 1665.<sup>5</sup>

### Waltham's Medieval Lady Chapel

But, if the medieval Lady Chapel wasn't here, then where was it? The church plan shows that all the plausible locations were already taken, not least by the abbey which occupied everything east of the transept's west wall. The plan also shows the western facade as merely a screen or wall, so despite its internal stairwells no-one seriously considered such a location – an elevated location at that – for the chapel. People were in despair at the dilemma, but more and more clues were being unearthed and a resolution was inching ever closer.



The western facade began to draw attention. Some spiral stairs which begin high up inside it are so worn that they must have been used extensively, although they now lead nowhere. They were one of the church's big mysteries, and various theories have been put forward. In the 1960s for example, before archaeology revealed the round eastern chapels, it was thought that they once led to a chapel housing the Holy Cross of Waltham.<sup>6</sup>

In 2012, the late archaeologist Peter Huggins proposed that they may have led to the medieval Lady Chapel, high up in the west facade.<sup>7</sup> In support of this, he cited some amazing detail in the medieval deeds, the extreme wear of the spiral stairs, and also the fact that their steps turn in opposite directions, which he thought might facilitate a one-way flow of worshippers.

The information given in the deeds is indeed difficult to reconcile with a screen-type facade, which should have no internal spaces (apart from stairs and passages), so for Peter to have taken up the challenge was brave. One deed<sup>8</sup> tells us categorically that 'the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary' was 'at the western head of the parish church of Waltham' (*Capella beate Marie virginis ad Occidentale caput ecclesie parochialis de Waltham*), and six more tell us that it was under a belfry (*sub campanile*). So, was our facade only a screen, or was there more to it? Peter added that 'a great deal of surveying work is needed to clarify the situation...this, at the time of writing, is a very exciting prospect.'<sup>9</sup> But he was already about 90, and died in 2016 without achieving this aim.

As we were both interested in the tower, in 2015 we agreed to survey the facade together, looking for evidence of a Lady Chapel and mapping the ancient passages and stairs, but it very quickly became obvious that they were so complicated that in order to understand them, we would have to unravel the

facade's labyrinthine structural history as well.

Jumping forward to 2020, we have extensively surveyed the facade, learning a great deal about it which we hope will form a future article. But it was only after we'd made comparisons with many other churches that we were at last able to propose a location for its Lady Chapel, the subject of this paper.

Our survey's first comparison actually concerns the imposter – the south chapel. It shares a number of circumstances with the medieval Lady Chapel at Worksop Priory, which seems at first to confirm our chapel's traditional identification. Both were built in the corner between south transept and south aisle. Both churches were monastic but had their naves separated off as parish churches. Both naves survived the Dissolution, and both chapels also survived, demonstrating their parochial status. But one crucial difference casts a striking shadow.

Our chapel's compromised location *west* of the transept, when Lady Chapels would be as far east as possible, is usually explained by the parish having no access to anywhere further east as it lay within the monastic precinct. But Worksop's chapel was built *east* of the transept, in the corner between it and the south aisle of the church's choir, not its nave. So it was built within the monastic area, and after the Dissolution it stood alone when the transept and choir were demolished. Therefore the explanation given at Waltham is insufficient – if our chapel was a Lady Chapel then theoretically it could – and probably would – have been placed further east.

This thinking may seem to discount even more so the location of a Lady Chapel in Waltham church's western facade, but as it was denied an eastern 'head', perhaps a western one was adopted instead – precedents include Durham Cathedral's

Galilee, which was a Lady Chapel intended for its eastern end, but local geology forced its western relocation;<sup>10</sup> and the predecessors of Canterbury and Winchester Cathedrals both had upper 'western head' Lady Chapels.<sup>11</sup>

Comparative observation allowed us to dispel however the suggestion that our facade's mirrored inner stairs provided a one-way route to and from an upper chapel. We found that the wear of their steps differs: the northern stairwell, the one which gave rise to the theory, provided access to the west tower from the 1550s to the 1790s, explaining its much heavier wear, whilst the southern stairwell has been out of use ever since the 1550s. Furthermore, similar stairwells in other church facades never lead anywhere except to clerestories and nave roofs, even though they also form mirrored pairs (which we interpret as symbolically related to the spiral pillars found in nave arcades). And of course a one-way system employing two upper stairwells at Waltham being accessed from the ground floor by just one stairwell, which our work has established was the case, would not make sense.

### Documenting the Facade

Externally, the facade gives every indication of being the simple screen which it is supposed to be. As such, it would seem that there isn't room for a western chapel, but we must remember that what survives is not complete and we are filling in gaps with supposition. Crucially, its central bay was substantially replaced by the later tower and can no longer be seen externally.

Inside, the story is very different – remains of the central bay of the facade, or more precisely of its twin-towered predecessor, are so pervasive that it clearly had to be built around them. Although we still found no indisputable evidence for a chapel, what can be said with confidence is that this was no straightforward screen-type facade. In fact, the wealth of

evidence took us on an extensive journey of discovery regarding the facade itself whilst our search for the chapel stalled, but in the end we believe we managed to discover by elimination not only that there could have been a chapel, but also exactly where it could have been and even what form its structure might have taken.

As an article on the Lady Chapel, this account merely touches on our thinking on the facade itself. A great deal of deductive reasoning lies behind it and much will have to be taken on trust. For the sake of brevity what follows may appear to be self-confident, but it is a tentative proposal of a likely course of events, not a statement of proven fact. It does however rest upon these primary sources:

1. A Notarial Instrument of 1286.<sup>12</sup> This is a legal record of the parishioners' agreement to 'repair' (maintain) the parish church, announced at a Sunday service two weeks after the Dean had carried out the Abbot's instructions to demand this of them, on pain of parochial excommunication if they refused, and with considerable emphasis placed on the financial burden they would face if they allowed the church to collapse.
2. The medieval guild deeds at ERO. Twenty of these<sup>13</sup> record the existence of two guilds in this parish from 1349 to after the Reformation. Each employed 'guardians' (priests) to keep 'lights' (candles) burning at altars. The guilds were dedicated to St Sepulchre and to the Virgin Mary.
3. A Petition of 1540.<sup>14</sup> On the day of the abbot's surrender, the parishioners asked Henry VIII to leave the abbey's central tower standing for parochial use, and to sell them some of the abbey's eight bells in it. Henry VIII assented: the tower was left standing

(minus three of its four limbs) and the parish acquired five of the bells. The tower then collapsed and a new tower was built out of its rubble at the west end of the church in 1553–58. The bells had to be sold to finance the completion of the new tower.<sup>15</sup>

The Notarial Instrument can be interpreted in different ways, but as the 'repairs' deemed so crucial were 'completed' after only two weeks, this must mean that what was being demanded was not actual repairs but responsibility for them, which suggests that a loophole was being closed. Until its elevation to an abbey, the whole building had been both monastic and parochial and may have been maintained by the clerics, meaning that the parishioners had enjoyed an unusual exemption from such a burden. The consecration of the abbey in 1242 liturgically divided the structure into two, but perhaps it hadn't been made clear to the parishioners that they now had to keep their part of it in good order. Perhaps no maintenance was being done by anyone to the parish church and by 1286 it was becoming apparent. The Instrument's clarification also led to the church being physically walled off from the abbey – the two small blocked doors in that dividing wall have been dated to c.1300.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, the parish church was causing the abbot a second headache. The principal route to the church, especially for high status processions, was from due west along what is now Highbridge Street, and what greeted the arriving visitor was the parish church's imposing twin-towered facade, giving every appearance of being the abbey they had come to visit. Even worse, the abbey's central tower was shadowed indistinctly behind it. This was tolerated for some time; the reason may be financial as the outlay on the abbey must have been considerable, but plans were afoot, and

the abbot killed both birds with the one Instrument.

He evidently decided to remove the twin towers and remodel the western facade so that it instead paid homage to the abbey tower rising above it. But the facade had been put into parochial hands along with the nave, and this raised the issue that if he paid for a replacement facade to the parish church, would this imply his responsibility for maintaining all of it, as in the days of old? The Instrument's underlying purpose seems to have been to avoid such an implication. It allowed the abbot to replace the facade with a damage limitation clause in place, setting out where his liability ended and the parochial one started. That would be very fortuitous for him.

This dates the demolition of the twin towers to after 1286. Each was taken down to its lowest storey; work then started on removing them. First, the outer (north and south) walls and their corner piers, aligned with the aisle walls, were demolished, leaving the inner tower piers either side of the west door to support the nave arcade, but this they failed to do, most likely due to the loss of the great mass of the towers above them (remember that at this time a central tower was exerting lateral thrust at the other end of the arcade). The whole arcade leaned westwards and its western bays began to split apart. The facade project was halted whilst emergency repairs were made, but thanks to the Instrument they were done at parochial expense.

Though Gothic in style, the repairs lack finesse, prompting much comment by mid-Victorian writers, who thought that this was an architect's poor attempt to modernise the arcade, abandoned after causing its failure (Fig 4).<sup>17</sup> This has never been challenged until now, so we are being controversial, but one reason for the poor finish must be the lack of good stone available to a parochial client – no doubt the abbot had kept all the stone from



the towers for his remodelling project, and presumably for other developments within the abbey's precincts. Perhaps tellingly, in 1859 William Burges reported just before his restoration of the church that the same architect had stripped from the aisles 'every available portion of their fine ashlaring'.<sup>18</sup> He saw it as vandalism and put it right, but it may have been a case of sheer necessity. He also attributed the removal of the aisle vaulting likewise, but perhaps it had failed as a result of the arcade shifting. In other words, we agree with Burges associating these three events together, but not with their cause.

Likewise, the reason for the Gothic arches must be that they were the latest structural technology of the time, and stonemasons familiar with the principles of Gothic vaulting would balk at the very idea of recreating semi-circular Romanesque arches, especially during an emergency repair where stability was key and decoration was an extravagance. Similarly substantial repairs in later styles to earlier arcades are also evident elsewhere, though not perhaps so rushed, notably for example at St Albans and Selby; so although our proposal is controversial, what we are proposing isn't: it is merely another example of medieval rationality. At Waltham, the technological advance made possible by Gothic vaulting also allowed the complete removal of some of the lower Romanesque arches, which no doubt provided some very welcome large blocks of stone for the repairs.

This whole process took a great deal of time, possibly because parochial funds got stretched beyond their limit, frequently stalling progress. The repairs are dated to c.1315–20,<sup>19</sup> but we don't know when after 1286 the tower demolition began or how long it took, or when the failure occurred. Although it seems the outer turrets and bays of the new facade had already been started, its inner turrets



**4. North arcade, 2nd and 3rd bays from the west end.**  
(L. Greenall, 17/08/2017)

and central bay had to wait until the church had been stabilised. A further delay was probably caused by the Great Famine of 1315–17,<sup>20</sup> full economic recovery not appearing until the mid-1320s.

Thus, it seems that the repairs were completed by c.1315, but work on the facade didn't resume until the 1320s, probably even later. One thing which was clearly not attempted was the removal of the old inner tower piers. Instead, the new facade was very awkwardly built around them. This explains why its inner passage, which runs continuously on one level across other facades, involves at Waltham a steep climb of c.1.75m from either end towards the central section, and then a

similar descent down spiral stairs to access its central passage across the nave.

Dating the western chapel is straightforward: it cannot have been started before c.1320 and its guild was described as 'of new ordination' in April 1349.<sup>21</sup> The south chapel is dated stylistically by various authorities to 1300–30;<sup>22</sup> one dates certain features to c.1348–50.<sup>23</sup> We therefore think that its design predates c.1320 but its construction started later, and also seems to have dragged on. Perhaps the west chapel was finished as part of the west facade project, but construction of the south chapel may have depended on the availability of masons in between abbatial commissions, including the west facade. It is first recorded in September 1365,

in a grant of property which includes a clause that should the maintenance of the light of the sepulchre be neglected, the property is to go to the parish church instead.<sup>24</sup> This may suggest that even as late as 1365, the Sepulchral Guild had not yet proved itself.

Let's now sum up a notional sequence of events.

**1242:** Abbey of Waltham consecrated. Nave becomes only a parish church. Its maintenance is neglected.

**c.1285:** New west facade conceived.

**1286:** Parishioners ordered to 'repair' the nave.

**c.1300:** Nave walled off from the abbey. Our round dating for the facade.

**1286–c.1315:** Tower demolition. Erection of outer parts of the new facade. Structural failure of nave arcades. Time-consuming repairs to nave arcades. Stumps of inner tower piers made good.

**c.1315–20s/30s?:** The Great Famine interrupts progress. South and west chapels designed.

**c.1320s/30s?–49:** Central bay of the new facade and the south and west chapels erected.

### Shadows cast by an Invisible Lady Chapel

Our thorough survey refused to yield any irrefutable evidence of a chapel.<sup>25</sup> We looked everywhere – even in the aisles (the deeds do not actually say that it was upstairs). We studied other churches with western complexes (for example Lincoln Cathedral); we rechecked the medieval Latin with our professional translator (he said that although *western head* usually refers to fields, its use in a church context is quite acceptable).

We reconsidered the chapel's likely size – should we be looking for a tiny room with only enough space for a priest or two? We know that it had priests who

maintained lights in it, so it was therefore a chantry chapel. This suggests a small size, but the same factors also make the south chapel a chantry chapel, yet it is clearly of sociable proportions. Another dead end for us.

We even reconsidered the deeds' references not to two chapels but one: the sepulchral guild's guardians maintained their lights 'at the sepulchre.' If that was not a chapel, then was the south chapel the Lady Chapel after all, despite its 'Doom' painting? After careful research,<sup>26</sup> we are newly confident that the south chapel was symbolically sepulchral; therefore the Lady Chapel really was elsewhere. An interesting parallel is the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre in Winchester Cathedral, which has a set of similarly themed wall-paintings.<sup>27</sup> Another is the Jeruzalemkapel (Jerusalem Chapel) at Bruges, whose choir is comparably similar to the south chapel in being over a vaulted crypt representative of the Holy Sepulchre. The Chapel was also built like Waltham's under mercantile patronage.<sup>28</sup>

As for the south chapel's elevated position, although we found upper chapels elsewhere, upper Lady Chapels were rare except in domestic settings, such as Hedingham Castle, or were much earlier, as with the predecessors of Canterbury and Winchester Cathedrals. A tantalising exception is the west porch of St. Mary Magdalene, Debenham, Suffolk, above which is a late fourteenth century guild Lady Chapel.

What struck us though, were the numerous Madonna and Child statues above west or south parish church doors, apparently indicating the presence of a Lady Chapel within. During an archaeological dig in 1974, a statue of the Madonna and Child was discovered at Waltham Abbey, having been given a Christian burial. The Victoria and Albert Museum dated the statue to c.1380 and Waltham's Marian guild had one in 1389.

Its design shows that it was 'intended to stand in a high niche'; and its condition 'suggests a position inside a building.'<sup>29</sup> One setting proposed later was on a wall in the guild's or the abbey's Lady Chapel,<sup>30</sup> but could it instead have been above the church's west door, under some sort of shelter?

Its burial was linked with the Dissolution of Chantries in 1547,<sup>31</sup> but if it was defaced above a door it could have remained in situ, as so many others do to this day, until removed and buried with veneration when the porch made way for the new west tower in 1553, when England became Catholic once more. This would explain why the statue was removed and interred.

The original facade design could not have included the chapel because it was a parochial guild chapel within an abbatial facade – a conflict of interests. Therefore the chapel was added later to the design, but because of the delays in construction both were probably built together. What comes to mind is some sort of abutting west porch.

The 1286 Instrument put legal responsibility for the nave's maintenance on the parishioners, but also gave them and their manorial lord legal control over its spatial development. Most obviously, as soon as the repairs were completed the south chapel was erected. A western one was evidently also erected within the new facade, a bold step if it was the abbot's project. Perhaps a deal was struck for a 'west porch' as part of the 1286 agreement, or more likely during the delay and compromise resulting from the later arcade failure.

It is notable that although the south chapel is a parochial structure, it was evidently designed and built by master masons in imported stone of limited availability, restricting the visible use of flint (the most ubiquitous 'stone' in Essex) to decoration, possibly signifying parochial status. This does suggest



high level collaboration between parish and abbot in terms of design, supplies, and project management. Remember that the nave was then being stripped of ashlar for unexpected arcade repairs – a significant contrast. Perhaps such cooperation can also explain a parochial chapel-porch in the west facade.

The one location which we couldn't survey proves to be the one place where the chapel could have been, so in a sense we have cornered our quarry – it has no other shadows to hide in. Peering more closely into this shadow, new clues emerge of a kind too indistinct to be noticed earlier.

The first clue hardly seemed worth comment until we found an intriguing parallel elsewhere. The east walls of Norwich Cathedral's transepts have three bays of windows on three levels. The central bays of the two lower levels have projecting chapels, which being wider than their bays push the flanking windows apart, which are therefore not aligned with their third level counterparts. In Waltham's facade, the small side door and window in its southern bay are also pushed outward, unlike the round window above them. Could this be a compromise of the design due to the addition of a porch?

Secondly, the passage across the facade's central bay was curious in two respects. It was walled off from the nave to its east, which is most unusual, for central passages normally run open to the nave, forming an inner ledge to the great west window. Does this wall date instead to the 1550s? The case appears difficult because the organ gallery obscures much of it, but certain features (the bonding of the stairwell, side door and window, and a pair of capitals high up in the wall, discussed next) make it clear that this part of the wall does date to the c.1300 facade.

The passage's eastern wall wasn't to support the massive section of wall above it because



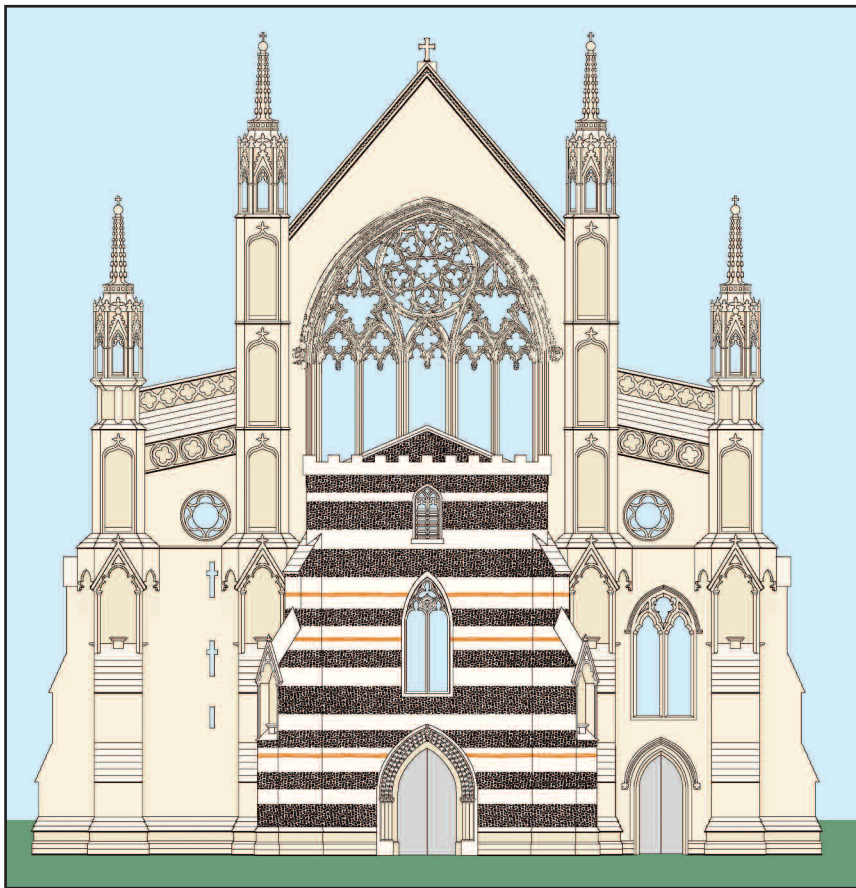
**5. The northern capital of the great west window, as seen from the nave. Maximum exposed area about 16 cm wide. (L. Greenall, 13/01/2018)**

that is indeed mostly 1550s blocking up of a west window. The survival of a pair of capitals high up on either side are clear evidence that there was a great window in the top of this wall, therefore the passage was effectively positioned outside the facade not inside it, and the walling off of the passage from the nave had some other specific purpose (Fig 5).<sup>32</sup>

One might assume that this window must have had an inner ledge at the height of the passage, thus making its arrangement just described impossible, but no evidence of the windowsill was found and it could easily have been higher up, above this passage, thereby making provision for a west porch below, incorporating the passage. It has been said of the shallow pitch of the Galilee's roof at Durham, that 'This meant that the height of the

building could be maximized without unduly obscuring windows in the west front.'<sup>33</sup>

Cracks in the wall's mortar suggest that the window's shafts still partly exist below the capitals, but we could not establish their full extent. Further cracks also show the starts of arches springing from the capitals, and their arcs tentatively suggest a single great west window. Next, whilst it is natural to assume that the central passage was walled on both sides, there is no evidence for this. It is possible that the passage formed an outer gallery above the west door, or ran across the back of a room over it. If that was a chapel, then perhaps the passage did have two walls, its western one forming the chapel's eastern wall to accommodate an altar. The eastern passage wall would then provide privacy from the nave.



**6. Theoretical elevation of the facade as constructed, c.1349.  
(The authors)**

We must lastly consider the belfry. One large enough for a ring of bells comes to mind, but the 1540 Petition tells us that the parish church only had ‘but one litle bell...sithe the tyme of Kyng Henry the seconde,’<sup>734</sup> when the abbey appropriated all the bells in the central tower for its own use. And since the parishioners asked to keep the central tower as well as some of its bells, the belfry above the west chapel must have been too small or otherwise not suitable. Perhaps it was within a pitched roof or formed a bellcote above a parapetted flat roof; although it could also have occupied a second floor to the porch.

### Conclusion

Our work has failed to prove the existence of the west facade’s Lady Chapel; however it also failed to disprove it, and by elimination has shown that it could have existed in the one location where we couldn’t survey – where the west tower

now stands. We therefore propose that this tower had a predecessor, which probably took the form of a less tall west porch with a chapel on its first floor, a modest belfry above that, and a great west window above them, its sill higher than usual to accommodate the porch.

It is tempting to try to consider its appearance, and we do have good clues – it would probably have been a sibling of the south chapel, and of a form not unlike other church porches with upper floors of the same period (Fig 6). Plus, the outer west door is a fourteenth century one thought to have probably been salvaged from the abbey, but that is based on the assumption that the west tower had no predecessor. Since we are now proposing otherwise, perhaps this door hasn’t travelled very far at all. At its apex is a defaced figure (Fig 7). If the hat he seems to be wearing is pointed (too little remains to be sure) then he is a mitred abbot,

and this would be the perfect finishing touch for our – or rather his – west facade.

### References

1. There were also earlier churches on the site; for details, see P.J. Huggins, *The Church at Waltham: an Archaeological and Historical Review* (Waltham Abbey, 2016).
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3. Essex Record Office (ERO), D/DJg T12 & D/DJg T51, records of Waltham Holy Cross solicitor; and D/DU 389, deeds collected by WAHS.
4. G. Weltch, *An Historical Tour of the Lady Chapel and Crypt of the Parish Church of Waltham Holy Cross and St. Lawrence, Waltham Abbey, Essex* (Waltham Abbey, 2016).
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6. H. R. Darby, *The Story in Sound of Waltham Abbey*, 7” record, (Waltham Abbey, 1961). This is discussed in G. Weltch, *Waltham Abbey Church Saved! For the People and the Nation* (Waltham Abbey, 2019), pp.57, 60.
7. Huggins, *The Church at Waltham*, p.10.
8. ERO, D/DJg T12/12, grant, 02/08/1359.
9. Huggins, *The Church at Waltham*, p.10.
10. S. A. Harrison, ‘Observations on the architecture of the Galilee Chapel’, *Anglo-Norman Durham 1093-1193* (Woodbridge, 1994), p.213–34.
11. K. Blockley et al, *Canterbury Cathedral Nave: Archaeology, History and Architecture* (Canterbury, 1997), pp.105-11; A. W. Klukas, ‘Liturgy and Architecture: Deerhurst Priory as an Expression of the Regularis Concordia’ in *Viator*, 15 (1984), pp.90–1.
12. J. Burrt, ‘Notarial Instrument, setting forth a Mandate of the Abbot of Waltham, Essex, and the proceedings relative to the Repair of the Church there. A.D.1286’ in *The Archaeological Journal*, 23 (1866), pp.293-8.
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14. J. Gairdner & R.H. Brodie,



- Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, 15 (London, 1896), entry 394.
15. T. Fuller, *The history of the University of Cambridge, and of Waltham Abbey: with the Appeal of injured innocence* (London, 1665, 1840 ed), pp.270, 275.
  16. J. Bettley & N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Essex* (London, 2007), p.806.
  17. For example: W. Burges, *A Report on the Present Condition of the Abbey Church*, (1859), p.6 & E.A. Freeman, 'The Architecture and Early History of Waltham Abbey Church', *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, 2 (1863), pp. 30-1.
  18. Burges, p.6.
  19. RCHM, *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Essex*, 2 (London, 1921), pp.237-46.
  20. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\\_Famine\\_of\\_1315-1317](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Famine_of_1315-1317), (19/7/2019).
  21. ERO, D/DU 389/3, grant, 14/04/1349.
  22. Listing description, 1956 ([historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1124155](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1124155), (19/7/2019)); RCHM, pp.237-46.
  23. Welch, *Lady Chapel*, p.3.
  24. ERO, D/DJg T12/23, grant, 28/09/1365.
  25. Tantalisingly, the ringing chamber passage's rough 1550s western wall faces a possibly c.1300 dressed eastern wall. Where this meets an opening cut through a facade stairwell, there seems to be the internal round moulding of a right-angle corner between it and a now lost wall projecting westwards out of the facade. Could this be a remnant of an earlier room at this height, or was it a facade buttress?
  26. We owe a particular debt to Christopher Herbert's unpublished thesis *English Easter sepulchres: The History of an Idea* (University of Leicester, 2007).
  27. D. Park, 'The wall paintings of the Holy Sepulchre Chapel' in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Winchester Cathedral* (London, 1983), pp. 38-62; and [www.context.magic-nation.co.uk/sepulchre4.htm](http://www.context.magic-nation.co.uk/sepulchre4.htm), (14/08/19).
  28. [www.adornes.org/en/inventaris.onroerendergoed](http://www.adornes.org/en/inventaris.onroerendergoed).



7. Carved figure (of a mitred abbot?) at the apex of the outer west door. (L. Greenall, 08/02/2020)

- [be/erfgoedobjecten/83393](https://be/erfgoedobjecten/83393), (14/08/19).
29. R.M. Huggins & K.N. Bascombe, 'The Waltham Abbey Madonna' in *London Archaeology*, 2 (1975), pp. 288-9.
  30. Huggins, *The Church at Waltham*, pp.6-7.
  31. *Ibid*, p.7.
  32. Close inspection of this wall revealed that it consists between these capitals of randomly re-used dressed blocks, often bearing carved designs, so the west window was walled up in the 1550s when the west tower was built, similarly with rubble salvaged from the central tower.
  33. Harrison, p.214.
  34. C. Deedes & H. S. Walters, *The Church Bells of Essex: their founders, inscriptions, traditions and uses* (1909), pp.427-8.

#### Acknowledgements

Our deepest debt is due to Rev Peter Smith and the Parish Officers and Vergers of Waltham Abbey church for their patient generosity and keen interest in our work. We also thank those at many other churches who granted leave to survey their buildings in detail. Dr James Bettley, editor of several Pevsner volumes, generously gave us the benefit of his keen insight as our work progressed. We also

thank Grenville Welch, Mary Salton, and the WAHS committee for their support, and Brooke Westcott for his expertise with medieval Latin. Finally, it is with great pleasure that we dedicate this article to Stan Newens as the long-standing President of WAHS. His campaigning force leaves a memorable impression in all sorts of local spheres – was it really back in 1966 that he spearheaded the successful campaign to save the ancient town centre of Waltham Abbey from becoming another concrete New Town? Yes it was. There seems no end to his achievements since then.

#### The Authors

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**Steve Miller** is a retired civil engineer and transport planner. He served as the honorary treasurer of WAHS and as a member of the Waltham Abbey bell ringing group for well over a decade. His particular area of interest is the interpretation and conservation of historic buildings.

# What happened to the Jekyll MSS?

## An attempt to establish their extent and descent

by

Michael Leach

**T**hough James Strangman (?d.1595) of Hadleigh, a member of the short-lived Elizabethan Society of Antiquaries, was the first known collector of material for a history of Essex, little is known about the extent or the fate of his manuscripts.<sup>1</sup> More is known about a later Essex antiquarian, Thomas Jekyll (1570-1652) of Bocking, who also gathered manuscripts for a planned history of the county from the time of Julius Caesar's invasion to the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Though he compiled a draft history (now lost), he failed to get anything into print, and none of his correspondence has survived. The fate of his manuscript collections has been retold many times by later historians from the early eighteenth century onwards. The intention of this paper is to identify (and where possible to validate) these claims, to try to establish what Thomas Jekyll had owned, what became of his manuscripts (MSS) after his death, and their use by other Essex historians.

### Early accounts of the Jekyll collection

Thomas Jekyll (1570-1652) was a member of Lincoln's Inn, and Chief Clerk of the Paper Office, a post which gave him access to a wide range of public records, including those stored in the Tower of London, from which he probably amassed a considerable collection of transcripts. The first reference to his MSS is found in Edmund Gibson's revised edition of Camden's *Britannia* published in 1695, some four decades after Jekyll's death. Gibson acknowledged the help that he had received from the Essex clergyman and antiquary,

the Rev John Ouseley (1645-1708), noting that the latter had been 'very much assisted by that hopeful young gentleman, Mr. Nicholas Zeakill of Castle Hedingham who freely communicated the copies of many public records'.<sup>2</sup> This Nicholas (b.1655, d. after 1730) was the grandson of Thomas Jekyll but the nature of his 'free communication' is far from clear. There is evidence that, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, some of the Jekyll MSS were in Ouseley's hands, as will be shown later in this article. Humphry Wanley (the acquisitive agent for Robert Harley's collection which later formed the core of the British Library's Harleian MSS) writing soon after Ouseley's death in 1708, shows that Nicholas Jekyll believed that most of these still belonged to him, and had only been loaned to Ouseley.<sup>3</sup>

The next reference to the Jekyll MSS, albeit an indirect one, is found in the preface to Richard Newcourt's first volume of his *Repertorium*. While he acknowledged his direct debt to Ouseley, there is little doubt that much of Newcourt's information came from Jekyll MSS which had been acquired or borrowed. Newcourt clearly had a high opinion of Ouseley, and might not have known the source of his documents. He described him as

a worthy and learned Clergyman of this Diocese, and one extraordinarily well vers'd in Antiquities, especially of his own County of Essex, then Rector of Pantfield, since of Springfield Boswell and Little Waltham, in the same County, understanding what I was about, of his own Accord (like a true Friend and Promoter of

a Work of this Nature) came to me at my Office, inform'd himself of the Manner of my Proceeding, lik'd it, and lent me several Manuscripts to assist me.<sup>4</sup>

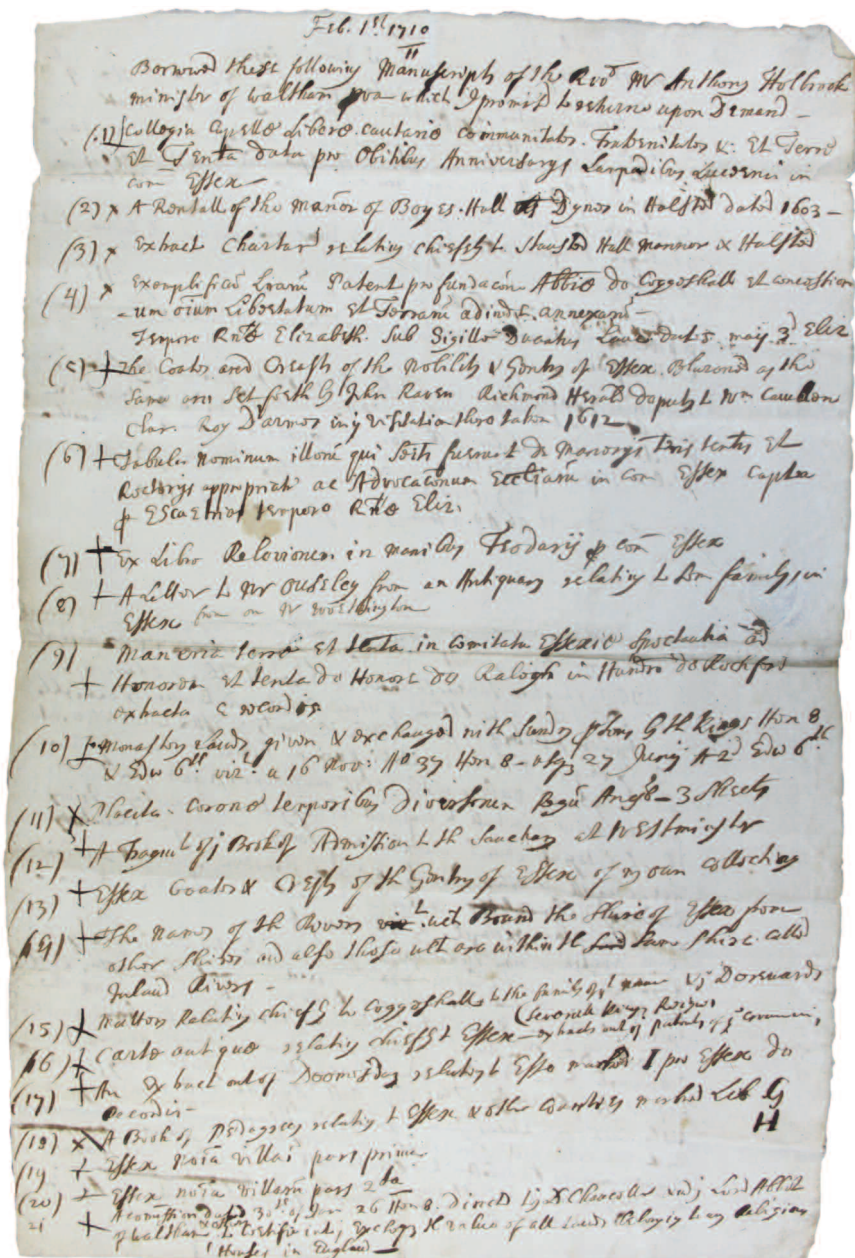
The relationship between Newcourt and Ouseley was a long one, dating from before the latter's resignation of his Essex living of Panfield in 1694, and continuing until the completion of Newcourt's second volume. This was published in 1710 and contains over 100 marginal references to 'Coll. Cl. D.J. Ouseley'.<sup>5</sup>

Subsequent evidence of the Jekyll MSS comes from a variety of other sources, connected directly or indirectly with another Essex historian, the Rev William Holman (d.1730). His detailed and assiduous research, carefully recorded by parish, contributed considerably to the success of later Essex historians. Essex Record Office holds some of the material amassed by Holman, including nearly 200 letters from Nicholas Jekyll, written between 1711 and 1730.<sup>6</sup> This correspondence shows that there was a warm and supportive friendship between the two men. Jekyll was providing Holman with advice and constructive criticism of his parish histories as they were completed. He also sent details of his own historical discoveries, as well as lending MSS from his grandfather's collection, and suggesting books and personal contacts which could assist Holman's research. It is also clear from these letters that Jekyll was insistent that any loaned MS should be returned, his sense of ownership having been sharpened, perhaps, by Ouseley's apparent acquisition by default of some of his grandfather's material.



In July 1715 Holman compiled an inventory of nearly 140 of the Jekyll MSS which were in his hands at that time. His descriptions of the MSS are commendably detailed, noting those which were in Thomas Jekyll's own handwriting, as well as recording any descriptive marks.<sup>7</sup> Holman appears to have been scrupulous about keeping records of what he had borrowed, both from Jekyll and from others. On different dates in February 1710/11, he listed a total of 33 MSS borrowed from the Rev. Anthony Holbrook, and in March that year another 14 MSS from Nicholas Jekyll<sup>8</sup> (Figs 1 & 2). He also recorded the loan of 16 books by Anne and Mary Millington in December 1714 and it is possible that there were other inventories which have not survived.<sup>9</sup> Holman's contact with Holbrook was to play an important part in the subsequent fate of the Jekyll MSS and this will be discussed below.

The Jekyll MSS were also known amongst the wider community of antiquaries. In 1711 the herald and Norfolk antiquary, Peter le Neve, wrote to an intermediary in Essex to seek his assistance in acquiring the whole collection as a gift, though he was willing to pay the cost of carriage.<sup>10</sup> This attempt was unsuccessful, but le Neve must have seen items, or obtained copies, because in a letter (datable on internal evidence to mid 1722) he noted that 'Mr Jekyll's IPMs for Essex are very good'.<sup>11</sup> Inevitably there must have been instances where loaned MSS were not returned, or were casually or unscrupulously acquired. One such event may have occurred in 1715 when Arthur Sutton, the genealogist and author of *The Baronetage of England*, borrowed Jekyll's book of pedigrees of baronets which he then passed on 'Mr Seager'. The latter, probably Simon Segar, author of *Honores Anglicani*, had taken the pedigrees to Yorkshire and refused to return them without a guarantee that he would be reimbursed for the cost



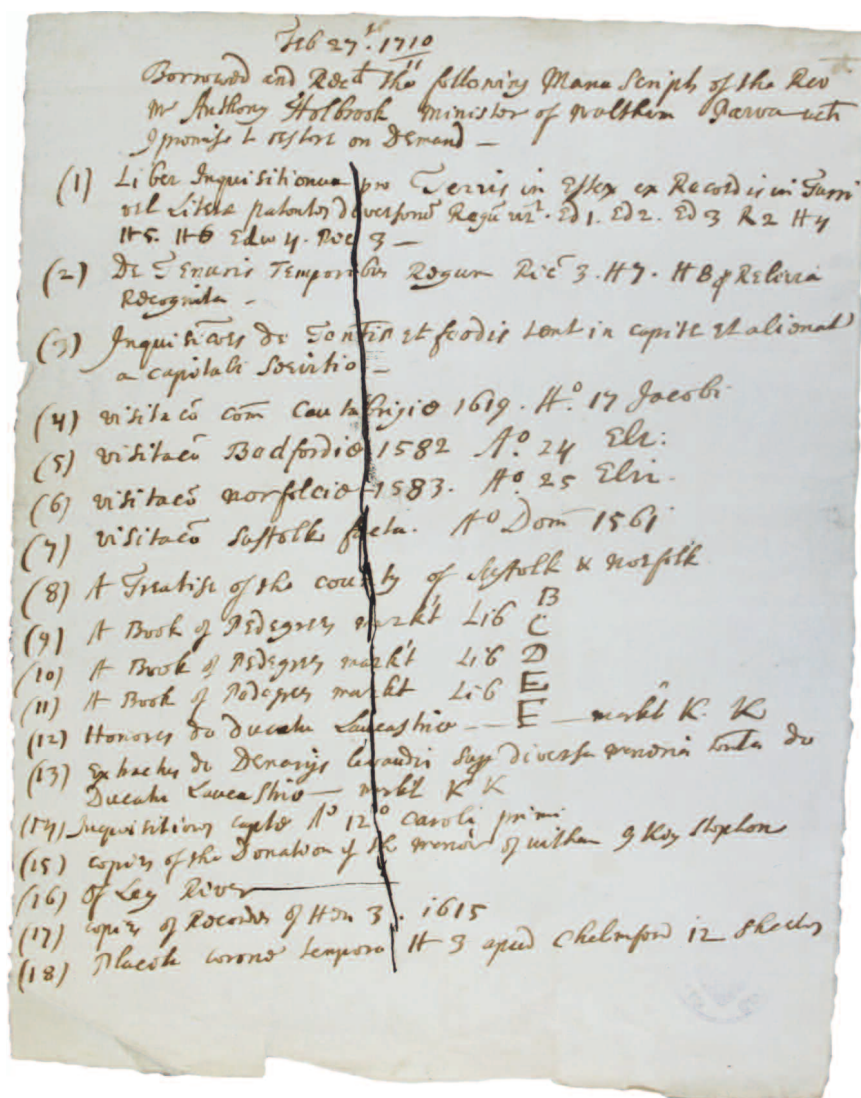
1. Part of Holman's list of MSS borrowed from Nicholas Jekyll on 1st February 1710/11. (All Essex Record Office (ERO) images reproduced by courtesy, D/Y 1/3/117 (i))

of carriage.<sup>12</sup> Though Jekyll was protective of his ownership of his grandfather's collection, he did sometimes give items away. A manuscript in the Bodleian is endorsed in his handwriting 'May 7 1710. Memorandum that I give this little Manuscript to the Reverend Mr William Holman of Halstead. N. Jekyll'. A more substantial gift was the 1634 copy of Essex Domesday, and 11 volumes of IPMs donated (on an unknown date) to an individual, identified on the basis of his handwriting as the herald, John Anstis (1699-1744), Garter King of Arms (Fig 3).<sup>13</sup>

### John Ouseley, his son-in-law Anthony Holbrook and the Jekyll MSS

It may have been Gibson's reference to Ouseley in the revised edition of Camden's *Britannia* that drew the attention of the compilers of Bernard's *Catalogi Librorum Manuscriptorum Angliae et Hiberniae* to his manuscript collection. Originally the Great Catalogue (as it is usually called) had been conceived as a record of MSS in university and institutional collections, but publication was delayed by the decision to include private collections such as



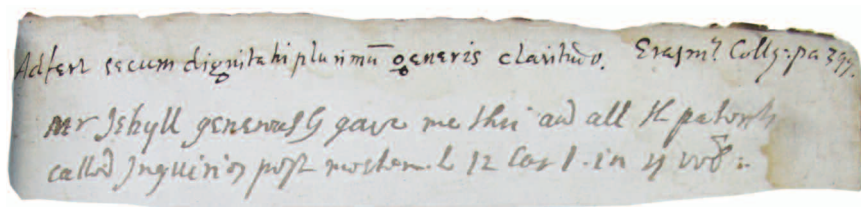


2. Part of Holman's list of MSS borrowed from Nicholas Jekyll on 27th February 1710/11. The vertical cancellation suggests that these had been subsequently returned. (ERO, D/Y 1/3/117 (ii))

Ouseley's. It is not known how the lists were compiled, or the criteria for inclusion, and Ouseley's list in the *Great Catalogue* is quite brief, with only 22 items. Many have little relevance to Essex, but five can be tentatively matched to items in Holman's 1715 inventory, and may have originated from the Jekyll collection.<sup>14</sup> These are:

- i) 'Warlike Ordinances set down for H.8's Journies into France An 1513' (*Great Catalogue*) and 'Warlike Ordinances set down for Henry the 8th's Journey into France' (*Holman's inventory*)
- ii) 'A Treatise showing that Peace is fitter than Warr for this Nation' (*Great Catalogue*) and 'A Discourse of Peace shewing that Peace is more

3. Undated note, said to be in the hand of the Garter King of Arms Anstis, recording Nicholas Jekyll's gift of extracts of Essex Domesday. (ERO, D/DQs 38)



- fitting for the State and Realm of England than War' (*Holman's inventory*)
- iii) 'Information of Abuses in the Suppressing of Abbies' (*Great Catalogue*) and 'Information of Abuses in the Suppression of Abbies' (*Holman's inventory*).
- iv) 'Thomas de la More, Knight, a French author of the Life and Death of Edward II. Translated out of French into Latin by Walter Suynburn' (*Great Catalogue*) and 'Sr. Thomas Delamare Knt. a ffrrench Author of the Life and death of Edw. The Second' (*Holman's inventory*).
- v) 'Several books of pedigrees' (*Great Catalogue*) and 'Pedigrees of the Gentlemen of Essex – four books, drawn up by Mr Jekyll himself' (*Holman's catalogue*)

It has not been possible to discover the present whereabouts of any of these.

Ouseley was buried at Panfield on 17th January 1708/9 and as he left no will, his manuscript collection became the responsibility of his two principal creditors who were appointed to administer his estate.<sup>15</sup> One of these was his son-in-law, the Rev Anthony Holbrook (c.1676–1749) another Essex clergyman who collected manuscripts relevant to the county's history. He and his co-administrator probably had some difficulty in establishing the rightful ownership of parts of Ouseley's collection, and in deciding what assets they could sell to meet his debts. In 1709/10 Holbrook wrote to Humphrey Wanley about the MSS, and commented that 'Jekyll's grandson claimed a great many of them' and 'that he (i.e. Nicholas Jekyll) is willing to part with them for a valuable consideration; he has a very great quantity of them'. Doubtless any that were purchased at this point by Wanley for his client Robert Harley found their way into the British Museum, and are now buried amongst the mass of Harleian



MSS. The same source noted another (but undated) letter to Wanley in which Holbrook observed that some of Ouseley's papers were being held by the Stamp Office as security 'for a person who went off'.<sup>16</sup> The details, ownership and fate of this part of his collection are unknown, but it may well have included Jekyll material.

More than a decade after his death, the problems of the ownership of Ouseley's MSS were still not fully resolved. Peter le Neve, writing to Holman in 1720, refers to a visitation of Staffordshire 'belonging to Mr Owsley'. This may have been one of the several county visitations of which Jekyll owned copies, though this particular county does not appear in Holman's 1715 inventory. Le Neve asked him to try to retrieve the visitation from the new owner of Mr Stebbing's library.<sup>17</sup>

The details of Ouseley's MSS are further confused by Holbrook's role as a collector and seller of manuscripts in his own right. In 1709/10 he was negotiating to sell Wanley another MS, 'the Leiger Book of Dunmow' which does not appear to have belonged to Jekyll. In 1725/6 he had further dealings with Wanley over some unspecified MSS. It seems unlikely that the latter sale, nearly two decades after Ouseley's death, was related to settling his father-in-law's affairs, though it could have included items which Holbrook himself had acquired while acting as his father-in-law's administrator. One of these documents was considered by Wanley to be a copy of an Augmentation Office register made by the early seventeenth century antiquary, Ralph Starkey. This might have originated from Jekyll's collection, though it cannot be identified in any of the surviving inventories.<sup>18</sup>

Holbrook was also selling manuscripts to Holman. One of these was 'Extracts from Letters Patent' which contains an undated note recording Holman's

**4. Undated and unsigned note, suggesting that Nichols Jekyll was part of an extended network of antiquaries. (ERO, D/Y 1/3/117 (i))**

purchase.<sup>19</sup> Another example is a transcript of the Domesday Book for Essex, similarly inscribed and dated 1719.<sup>20</sup> The significance of these purchases is discussed below.

Though Holbrook mentioned his books and MSS in his will in 1733, he said nothing about his intentions for their disposal. It is probable that they were sold after his death in 1749 by his widow Elizabeth, or his son William, to whom they were jointly bequeathed.<sup>21</sup>

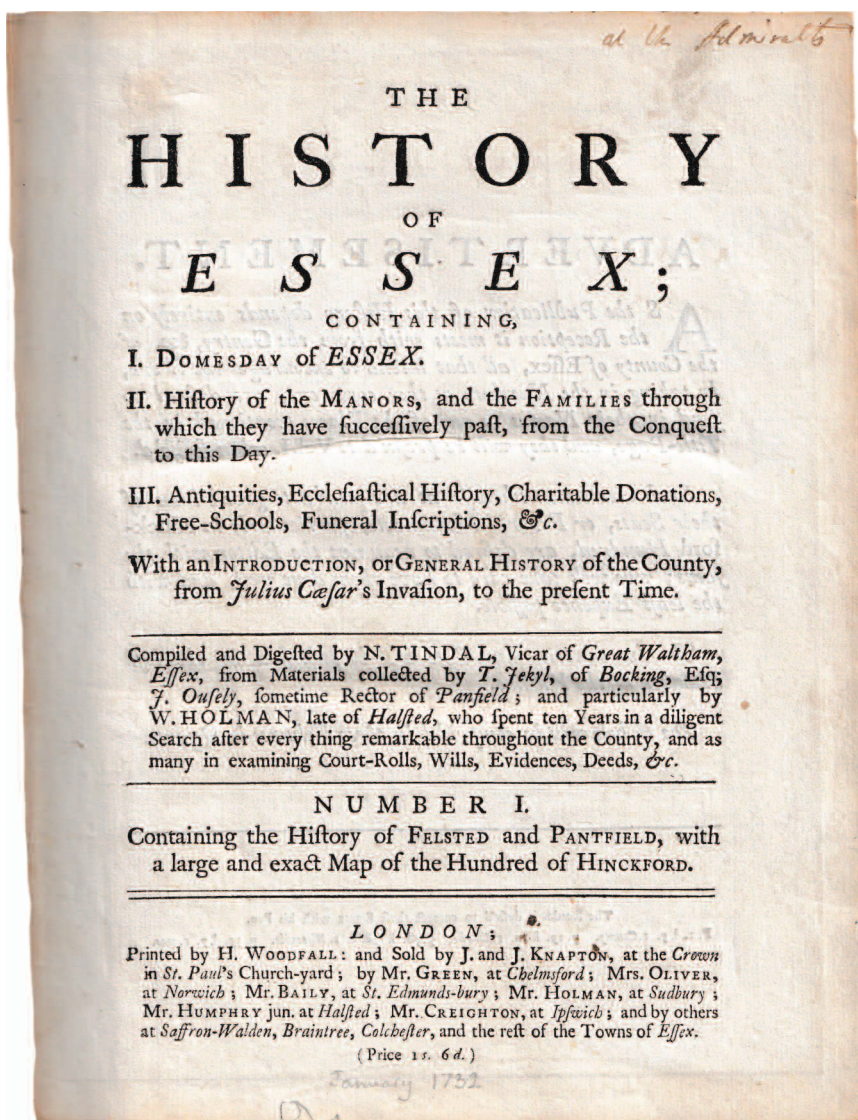
**William Holman and the subsequent ownership of his MSS**

This paper has suggested that, though there was a close friendship between Nicholas Jekyll and Holman, Jekyll's intention was to retain the ownership of his grandfather's collection (Figs 1 & 2). At no point in two decades of correspondence, which continued until a few days before Holman's sudden death on 4 November 1730, is there any suggestion that Jekyll was planning to donate them to him. However there is an ambiguity in Holman's 1715 inventory which merely lists Thomas Jekyll's MSS 'most of Which are in my Custody', whereas Holman's other lists generally added the rider 'which I promise to return on demand'. Macray, apparently using Gough as his source, described Holman as a 'voluminous collector... who incorporated the gatherings of The Rev. John Ousley and Thomas Jekyll'.<sup>22</sup> Did Nicholas Jekyll, in his later years, become

more casual about asserting his ownership, or did Holman become less scrupulous about returning them?

At this point it is necessary to trace the fate of Holman's MSS after his death. His son seems to have divided them into two groups, the first of which consisted of the completed Essex parish notes compiled by his father. These were passed to the Rev Nicholas Tindal for publication as part of a profit-sharing agreement which was signed on 2nd February 1731. Though a few parishes were published in 1732, the project failed to attract the support necessary to justify further issues, and was abandoned. Tindal's title page suggests that his main source was Holman's manuscripts, though Jekyll and Ouseley are also credited. This was, perhaps, an acknowledgement that Tindal had relied largely, or entirely, on Holman's well organised parish histories, rather than the other two sources. Tindal's title page stated:

Compiled and Digested by N. Tindal, vicar of Great Waltham, Essex, from Materials collected by T. Jekyl, of Bocking Esq; J. Ousely, sometime Rector of Panfield; and particularly by W. Holman, late of Halsted, who spent ten Years in a diligent Search after everything remarkable throughout the County, and as many in examining Court-Rolls, Wills, Evidences, Deeds &c (Fig 5).<sup>23</sup>



5. Title page of Tindal's unsuccessful attempt to publish Holman's *History of Essex*. (Author's collection)

The second group of Holman's MSS was disposed of separately by William Holman junior after his father's death. This comprised the source materials that had been used in compiling the parish histories and these were listed in an undated inventory drawn up between 1730 and 1739, presumably in connection with their disposal. This inventory is discussed in more detail later in this article.

In September 1769, some three decades later, the Essex historian, Philip Morant, noted, in a letter to the antiquary Richard Gough, that 'Mr R. Rawlinson bought the refuse of Mr Jekyll's and Mr Holman's MSS (with a good cartulary of St Bartholomew's, London) for £10 and left them to the

Bodleian Library'. This purchase by Richard Rawlinson (antiquary, obsessional collector and benefactor of the Bodleian Library) was not dated, but Gough later claimed that it was in 1752. The latter added information about other purchases from the broken-up collection. Four folio volumes of Inquisitions post Mortem were purchased by William Mayhew of Colchester for 5 guineas, a Domesday heavily annotated by Holman went to Morant for 10 guineas, and a large trunk of papers relating to Essex was offered by Mr Sayer to the Suffolk antiquary and architect Sir James Burrough in 1758.<sup>24</sup>

After the failure of Tindal's publication project, Holman's parish histories were sold in 1739 for £60 to Nathaniel Salmon

who was a newcomer to Essex historiography. This might be why he concluded that 'The Name of Strangeman ... ought to be ever in esteem for his judicious Collections greatly useful in this History of Essex'. Neither Holman nor Tindal made any reference to Strangman's MSS and Salmon, who died destitute before he had written his introduction, provided no further clues. The title page of some bound copies of his incomplete book stated: 'from the Collections of Thomas Jeyll of Bocking Esquire, out of Papers, Charters, Inquisitions Post Mortem', and from the Papers of Mr Ouseley of Springfield, and Mr Holman of Halstead'.<sup>25</sup>

However it is likely that this page was put together by the printer after Salmon's death to make the unsold parts more marketable, and might not be reliable evidence. There are no further clues about the sources used in his *History* though there are several other passing references to Strangman within the text. After Salmon's death it is usually assumed (though it has proved impossible to corroborate) that Holman's parish histories were acquired by Anthony Allen, Master in Chancery, then passed to the Essex antiquary John Booth (who added corrections from the Domesday Book) and from him (directly or indirectly) into the hands of Philip Morant in 1750.<sup>26</sup>

### The subsequent ownership of the Jekyll MSS

Nicholas Jekyll's date of death has not been established (though it must postdate Holman's in November 1730), and no will can be found.<sup>27</sup> It is surprising that such an organised individual would not have made provision for his cherished papers, and it is not clear if the collection had remained intact at his death, or had already been broken up. In September 1769 Philip Morant, in a letter to Richard Gough, noted that its three most useful items were 'at Colchester'.<sup>28</sup>



Morant also provided further information about Thomas Jekyll:

He made a Collection of Memoirs for writing the History of this County and several of his own hand writing which Shows him a person of Great Judgement and Incredible Industry 'tis to his Memoirs I am much Indebted for the History of the County and Design to do Justice to his Memory by Obliging the Learned World with an Exact Account of his Manuscripts tho' I am certain that some of the most Valuable are lost and others mutilated. He had drawn up the History of this County from the time of Julius Caesar Invasion of Britain unto the Reign of Queen Elizabeth but all the Leaves are cut out by some Treacherous hand Except the first and last which was a Loss that cannot be repaired.<sup>29</sup>

This implies that some of the Jekyll MSS had been dispersed by that date. It is also possible that others, mingled indiscriminately with the Holman MSS, could no longer be separately identified, making the task of tracing the descent, and present whereabouts of these manuscripts more difficult. Unfortunately, Morant's promise to detail the Jekyll MSS does not seem to have materialised, apart from a much abbreviated copy that he made of Holman's 1715 inventory.<sup>30</sup> A discussion of the fate of Morant's own collection is beyond the scope of this paper.

Many of the Jekyll MSS can now be found in the British and Bodleian Libraries but tracing their earlier ownership is often frustrated by cataloguers' failure to record the provenance of their acquisitions, as well as the practice of collectors and libraries to bind separate parts of manuscript collections into a single volume. For example, the British Library catalogue identifies BL Add MSS 19,985-9 as five

volumes written in Thomas Jekyll's hand and is described as 'collections for a history of the County of Essex compiled from various official sources by Thomas Jekyll'. There is no indication when or how these volumes were acquired or bound together and they cannot be identified in Holman's 1715 inventory. It seems probable that they are a later compilation made up of numbers of Jekyll MSS, but a detailed examination of their contents would be necessary to establish this.

Further study of the Rawlinson MSS in the Bodleian Library could be productive too. Any identifiable Jekyll material is likely to have been that which was acquired by Rawlinson from Holman's son. One example is a transcript of Essex Domesday which is endorsed on the fly leaf in Holman's hand 'this book belonged to Anthony Holbrook...bought it of him for £8 and 4s...Nov. 5 1719'.<sup>31</sup> This may be the version in Thomas Jekyll's handwriting which Holman listed in his 1715 inventory, and subsequently purchased from Holbrook. If so, it would have passed to Rawlinson after Holman's death, and then by bequest to the Bodleian.

Considering the number of hands that the Jekyll MSS have passed through, and the loans to other antiquaries, it would not be surprising if some had found their way into other hands. In 1928, a London saleroom was offering a collection of Essex manuscripts (including a Domesday translation and a long run of IPMs) said to have come from the collections of Thomas Jekyll and William Holman (Fig 6). In 2000, another MS found its way to an Edinburgh dealer and was purchased by the British Library. It was a seventeenth century abstract of Great Domesday made by Arthur Agard, with rubrications and a contents list in Thomas Jekyll's hand. Its provenance is uncertain, but the BL catalogue

suggests that it may have been in Scotland since the early eighteenth century.<sup>32</sup> Clearly there may be other Jekyll MSS awaiting discovery and identification.

### **Nathaniel Salmon's inventory**

In addition to the sources already cited, there is an undated inventory of Holman's MSS made for his son, presumably in preparation for their disposal after his father's death in 1730 (Fig 7). The compiler was 'Dr Salmon'<sup>33</sup> and there can be little doubt that this was Dr Nathaniel Salmon (1675-1742) who would acquire Holman's parish compilations in 1739. The inventory contains only Holman's source materials, so is quite separate from Salmon's later purchase. As already noted, most of Holman's source material is believed to have been sold by William Holman junior to Dr Richard Rawlinson, with the residue going to William Mayhew of Colchester and others. Partial confirmation of this is found in Salmon's inventory on the back of which is a column of bundle numbers, noting that most had been sent to 'Mr E Holloway by Daking' and that one bundle was to be collected at Colchester. Mr Holloway cannot be identified as an antiquary, but was perhaps an agent or dealer, and Daking may have been the carrier.<sup>34</sup> It seems likely that the rump of the collection, destined for collection at Colchester, was the part which was acquired by William Mayhew and Philip Morant.

Salmon's inventory contains 53 entries and, though the descriptions are much less detailed than those in Holman's lists, it is possible to make tentative matches of twenty of them. These are shown in table 1.

### **The contents of the Jekyll MSS**

A detailed description of the 138 MSS (some with multiple contents) in the 1715 Holman

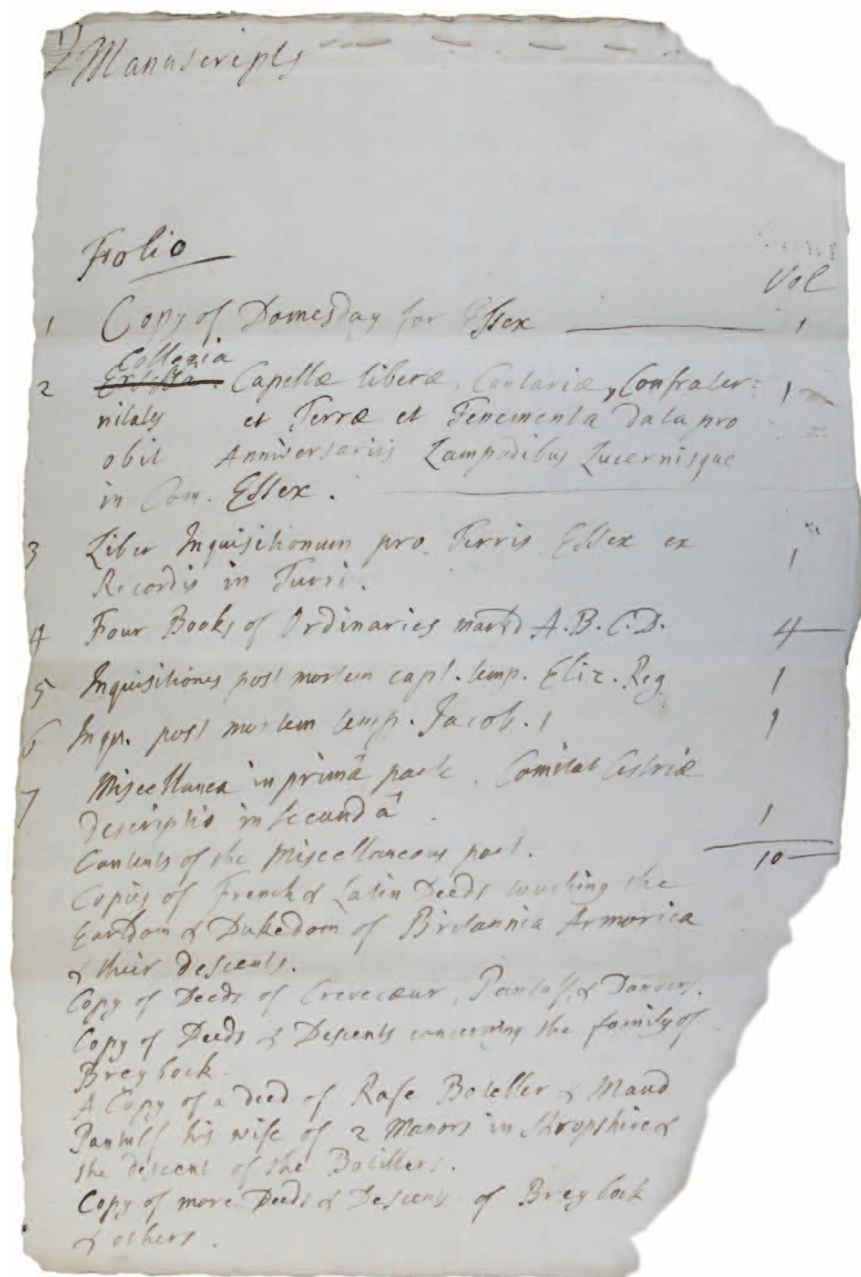
Exariatur per Scipionem le Squyre  
 & Thomam Fauconberge ProCamerarios  
 in recepta Scen<sup>ty</sup> Am Regis 17 die  
 Decembris 1634.

6. Verification by Scipio de Squyre of Thomas Jekyll's copy of extracts from Essex Domesday. (ERO, D/DQs 38)

inventory would be a lengthy task. Many are copies of central government records, such as Letters Patent from the time of King John, and IPMs of various

dates, some of which are noted to be wholly or partly in the handwriting of Jekyll. Others were presumably made by other copyists, or are abstracts of

7. First page of Holman's son's inventory of his father's MSS, compiled by Nathaniel Salmon (undated but between 1730 and 1739). ERO D/Y 1/3/132.



Essex material only. There is a considerable quantity of genealogical and heraldic material relating to royalty, titled families and gentry. Other documents provide local information about monastic houses, courts, taxation, manors, advowsons and ecclesiastical valuations. There is much material on Cheshire, including what appears to be a manuscript copy of Daniel King's *The Vale Royal of England* (which had been printed in 1656). In addition, a good number of other county visitations, descriptions and genealogies are listed, some of which were noted to have been transcribed by Jekyll. Some MSS cover more general areas of national history, as well as a list of the enquiries to be addressed by the short-lived Elizabethan Society of Antiquaries. Much to be regretted is the loss of Thomas Jekyll's draft history of Essex, entitled 'Lib K pro Com. Essex', which had been cut out of its bound volume before Morant acquired the MS. The 1715 Holman inventory describes Jekyll's intentions for this history: 'A Noble Design but Imperfect. His method was to treat of every Parish Alphabetically, What S<sup>t</sup> the Church was dedicated unto; Monumental Inscriptions, Patrons and Onera (sic) With the Arms of all the Chief Lordsh<sup>ps</sup> in Each Parish and Owners.'

Finally is a group of MSS of loosely antiquarian interest, not directly connected with county histories, such as 'The Life of Merlin in Verse', 'Sir Francis Drake's Voyage w<sup>th</sup> his Proceedings against Thomas Doughty' and 'Sr Thomas Delamare Kn<sup>t</sup> a ffrench Author, of the Life and Death of Edw<sup>d</sup> the Second'.<sup>35</sup>

### Conclusion

The descent of Thomas Jekyll's MSS to his grandson Nicholas can be confirmed from numerous sources, particularly from Nicholas's letters. It is also clear that a number were loaned or given (it is not certain which) to John Ouseley. After Ouseley's



death in debt, the trail is more difficult to follow. It fell to his son-in-law Anthony Holbrook, as one of the administrators of his estate, to resolve the ownership as best he could, and to realise whatever assets he could to meet Ouseley's debts. Some items may have been returned to Nicholas Jekyll, and others sold to Humphry Wanley, the latter subsequently finding their way into the British Library Harleian MSS. The fate of other Jekyll's MSS is complicated by Holbrook's role, both as a collector and as a dealer in his own right. It is clear that many of the Jekyll MSS remained with (or were returned to) his grandson who was able to lend them to William Holman and – almost certainly – to heralds and antiquaries elsewhere. Some of this loaned material was probably lost or not returned. At least in the earlier years of their relationship, Holman appears to have kept assiduous records of the MSS that he had borrowed. However an inventory of Holman's MSS (presumably made after his death) shows that by that date it contained plenty of Jekyll material (or possibly copies of the same items).

Perhaps in old age Nicholas Jekyll had become less thorough about ensuring the return of his loaned manuscripts. It is unfortunate that the date of his death, and his intentions for the disposal of his collection are not known.

It is possible to follow some of the Jekyll MSS which had been acquired, or retained by, Holman. The majority of those sold by his son to Dr Richard Rawlinson found their way into the Bodleian Library. It would seem that a smaller number went to William Mayhew in Colchester, as well as to others including Philip Morant who subsequently acquired Mayhew's portion.

It has been difficult to determine the precise details of the Jekyll MSS and their subsequent owners. Though various partial inventories survive, they vary

considerably in the level of detail that they provide, and it is often difficult to be sure if a MS in one can be matched with a similar item in another, though an attempt has been made to do this in Table 1. There are also difficulties in differentiating an original MS from a copy, or from a copy of a copy. The various Domesday Book extracts are a confusing example of this problem. A further complication is that modern library catalogues often fail to provide details of the provenance of items in their collections, and are inconsistent in recording informative inscriptions and notes that may have been added by subsequent owners. It is possible that further work, particularly on the MSS surviving in the British and Bodleian Libraries, as well as a detailed examination of the descent of Morant's MSS, might give a clearer picture.

#### References

1. H. W. King, 'James Strangman Esq. of Hadleigh, an eminent Essex Antiquary' *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, 1st series, 2, (1868), pp.139-146. Little can be added to the brief details about Strangman compiled by King, who was able to identify only a few manuscripts from Strangman's collection in the British Museum. These included a badly fire-damaged MS from the Cotton Library, of which only one portion was in Strangman's 'very obscure hand'. The Cotton Library fire occurred on 23rd October 1731, so this MS must have entered that collection before that date.
2. E. Gibson, (ed), *Camden's Britannia*, 1 (London, 1695) unpaginated f.2 ['Catalogue of Some Books & Treatises'].
3. C.F.D. Sperling, 'Thomas Jekyll', *Essex Review (ER)*, 3 (1894), p.260; R. Gough, *Anecdotes of British Topography* (London, 1768) p.160 fn. Ouseley also appears to have borrowed, and failed to return, some of Jekyll's books. See Essex Record Office (ERO), D/Y 1/1/111/4, letter of Nicholas Jekyll to William Holman, 05/12/1711.
4. R. Newcourt, *Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Diocesis Londinensis*, 1 (London, 1708) preface p.i.
5. R. Newcourt, *Repertorium...*, 2, (London, 1710) numerous pages. Newcourt's sources, which are listed in numerous marginal annotations, would be worth further study. The Ouseley references appear to be derived largely (but not entirely) from official state papers, of which the Jekyll MSS contained a considerable range. For a biography of Ouseley, see M. Christy, 'Rev John Ouseley (1645-1708); an early historian of Essex', *ER*, 21 (1912), pp.132-41.
6. ERO, D/Y 1/1/111/1-197, letters from Nicholas Jekyll to William Holman 1711-30.
7. 'An Exact Catalogue of all the Manuscripts and Papers belonging to Nicholas Jekyll of Castle Hedingham...made by William Holman July 25, 1715' Codrington Library MS 297, All Souls College, Oxford. Less detailed copies of this inventory were made later by Philip Morant (British Library (BL), Stowe MS 1056) and Richard Gough (BL, Egerton MS 2382). It is far from clear when or how Holman's original found its way into the All Souls library (he had no connections with the college) or when or how the Morant and Gough copies came to be made.
8. ERO, D/Y 1/3/117/3 (i), (ii) & (iii); ERO, D/Y 1/3/132. Some of the manuscripts which Holman borrowed from Holbrook in February 1710/11 can be confidently identified in Holman's 1715 inventory of Jekyll MSS. This appears to confirm that Ouseley died with a considerable number of Jekyll MSS in his possession; many, or possibly all, of these would have passed through Holbrook's hands as the administrator of Ouseley's estate.
9. ERO, D/Y 1/3/117 (i) (ii), (iii) & (iv); D/Y 1/3/132. Anne and Mary Millington were the daughters of the distinguished physician, Sir Thomas Millington MD of Gosfield Hall, who died in 1703/4. See P. Morant, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex*, 1 (London, 1768), p.382.

# Table 1

Title of Jekyll MS	Great Catalogue, 1695	Loans from Holbrook to Holman on; (a) 1st Feb (b) 27nd Feb (c) 22rd Mar 1711	Holman's 1715 inventory	Salmon's 1739 inventory
warlike ordinances	item 5		item 120	
information of abuses in suppression of monasteries	item 19		item 76	
treatise: peace fitter than war	item 12		item 132	
copy of Essex Domesday**		item 17 (a): extracts Essex Domesday	item 2★ or 30	item 1
pedigrees: 4 volumes	item 22: 'several books'	items 18(a) & 6(b) { B/C, D, E/F & G/H }	item 67★ { B/C. D/ E/ F & GH }	item 27
visitation of Suffolk 1561		item 1(b)	item 50	item 13
visitation of Norfolk 1563		item 6(b) { dated 1583 }	item 48★	item 14
visitation of Wiltshire 1565			item 44	item 15
arms of kings & nobility: Conquest to Elizabeth			item 27#	item 9
history of River Ley		item 16(b)	item 134	item 30
precedence of Irish nobility			item 72	item 45
liber inquis. pro terri in Essex ex recordis In Turri		items 10(b) & 2(c)		item 3
IPMs Queen Elizabeth			item 14★	item 5
IPMs King James			item 16	item 6
tabula inquis. in Essex in officio Parva Baga			item 35	item 21
names of rivers bounding shire of Essex		item 14(a)	item 33★	
copy French/Latin deeds re Britannia Armorica			item 43	item 7
carta antiqua relating to Essex		item 16(a)	item 31	
villarum et maneriorum in Essex in two parts			items 40★ & 41★	items 1 & 2
visitation of Bedfordshire 1582		item 5 (b)	item 46★	
visitation of Devon 1562			item 47 ★	



visitation of Oxfordshire 1574			item 51(i)*	
visitation of Buckinghamshire 1566			item 51(ii)*	
visitation of Cambridgeshire 1619		item 8(b)	item 52*	
visitation of Cheshire			item 53*	
visitation of Somerset			item 42	
treatise of counties of Norfolk and Suffolk			item 56	item 12
alphabetical table of single coats 2 vols			items 60, 61 & 62	item 11
four books of ordinaries marked A,B,C,D			items 63-66*	item 4
patent pro fundacione Abbie de Coggeshall 5 May 3Eliz		item 4(a)	item 89	
rental Boyes Hall a/s Dynes in Halstead		item 2(a)	item 105	
charters relating to Stansted Hall & Halstead		item 3(a)	item 104	
donations of Witham manor		item 10(c)	item 110	
Sir T. Delamare, author of Life & Death of Edward II	item 8		item 81	
<p>* Holman noted this MS wholly or partly in Jekyll's hand; **Holman's 1715 inventory has two copies of Essex Domesday, item 30 being described as an abstract. The British Library's catalogue of Agard's abstract of Lesser Domesday (BL Harley MS 5167) notes additions in Jekyll's hand, and identifies it as item 30 of the 1715 Holman inventory; # Holman noted that this copy was made by 'Edward Jekyll D.D.'</p>				

10. ERO, D/Y 1/1/146/1.

11. ERO, D/Y 1/1/146/59.

12. ERO, D/Y 1/1/44/3.

13. Bodleian, MS Rawl Essex 13, f.10v. For Anstis attribution, see front pastedown of ERO, D/DQs 38.

14. E. Bernard (ed), *Catalogi Librorum Manuscriptorum Angliae et Hiberniae*, 2 (Oxford, 1695), pp.103-4. It is accepted that the publication date of 1695 is erroneous due to the delays caused by the decision to include private MS collections.

15. Christy, p.140; ERO, D/ABAc 19, Probate & Acts of Administration, Commissary of Bishop of London. Administration was granted to Anthony Holbrook and Thomas Crachrode, 26/05/1709.

16. Gough, *Anecdotes*, p.160 fn.

17. ERO, D/Y 1/1/146/32. Samuel Stebbing, appointed Somerset Herald in 1700, was one of the

founder members of the re-established London Society of Antiquaries in 1707. He died in 1719 and part (or all) of his MSS were acquired by Thomas Jett, auditor of the Exchequer.

J. Savage, *The Librarian*, 2 (London, 1809) p.4; T. Moule, *Bibliotheca Heraldica Magnae Britanniae* (London, 1822), p.344.

18. C.E. & R.C. Wright, (eds), *The Diary of Humphrey Wanley*, 2 (London, 1966), pp.404-5, 408, 421. The 'Lieger Book' might have found its way from Wanley into Harley's collection as BL, Harley MS 662, which is described in the BL catalogue as a cartulary of Little Dunmow priory. The same source notes that this MS was presented to Wanley by William Nicolson, 28/04/1709. Nicolson, amongst his other interests, was an antiquarian and collector and, as bishop of Carlisle between

1702 and 1718, would have had opportunities to acquire manuscripts during his sojourns in London. However Nicolson's gift to Wanley predates the Wanley/Holbrook correspondence, suggesting (if the dates are correct) that this MS cannot be Holbrook's 'Lieger Book'.

19. Now BL, Add MS 19,986.

The five volumes are Add MS 19,985-19,989.

20. Now Bodleian, Rawlinson MS b.307.

21. ERO, D/ABW 96/2/82, will of Anthony Holbrook, 09/09/1749.

22. W.D. Macray, *Annals of the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1890), pp.238-9.

23. N. Tindal, *History of Essex*; no. 1 (London, 1732), title page.

24. C.F.D. Sperling, 'Historians of Essex: Philip Morant' *ER*, 3 (1894), pp.35, 36; E. A. Fitch, 'Historians of Essex: Nathaniel

- Salmon' *ER*, 2 (1893), p.238; J. Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, 2 (London, 1812), pp.705-6; R. Gough, *British Topography*, 1 (London, 1780), pp.345, 370. An undated inventory of the Holman MSS prepared for his son notes that some bundles were to be sent to Colchester (ERO, D/Y 1/3/132). Presumably these ones were destined for (amongst others) William Mayhew senior who was an attorney, active in local government affairs, and a leading light in the fight to retrieve the borough's charter (for Mayhew, see J. Cooper (ed), *The Victoria History of the County of Essex*, 9, *The Borough of Colchester* (London, 1994), pp. 147, 157 & 160-1.
25. N. Salmon, *History of Essex* (London, 1740/1), p.146; Gough, *Topography*, p.370 fn. See also endnote 1 above.
26. W. Addison, *Essex Worthies* (Chichester, 1973), pp.103-4. Anthony Allen (1685-1754) barrister & antiquary, grew up on the Herts/Essex border near the parishes where Salmon was briefly incumbent. Could they have been acquainted? (for Allen's ODNB biography see [doi-org.ezproxy2.londonlibrary.co.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/370](https://doi-org.ezproxy2.londonlibrary.co.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/370) (19/05/2019). John Booth (c.1694-1757) attorney-at-law & antiquary, under-sheriff of Essex in the 1740s, has no biography, but see brief biographical notes in Essex Society for Archaeology & History, *Newsletter*, 176, p.16 & 177, p.6, (2016).
27. Nicholas Jekyll's burial cannot be found in the Castle Hedingham parish registers between 1730-74. Essex Archives Online, PCC and Archdeaconry of Middlesex indexes have been searched for his will without success.
28. Nichols, pp.705-6. Morant listed the 'three most valuable' of the Jekyll MSS 'now at Colchester' as: i) copies of IPMs from 27 H.III to 14 Car. I ii) pedigrees of the gentry of Essex, 4 volumes and iii) abstract of Letters Patent from 1 Ric. III to 15 Jac. I. It seems probable that they were in the hands of William Mayhew (see endnote 24 above).
29. BL, Stowe MS 1056 ff.68-9.
30. Ibid.
31. Bodleian, Rawlinson MS b.307.
32. 'Sale of Essex MSS' reported in *ER*, 37 (1928), p.92. The lot associated with Jekyll (Domesday Book for Essex) had belonged to the obsessional manuscript collector, Sir Thomas Phillips (1792-1872), and was bought by John Avery of Woodford in the 1928 sale. It is now ERO, D/DQs 38 and can be positively identified as item 2 in Holman's 1715 inventory - All Souls Codrington Library, MS 297. The catalogue entry suggests that Harley MS 5167, Agard's abstract of Lesser Domesday, covering Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk, is the companion volume, and also has amendments in Jekyll's hand. Neither match the three Domesday copies (items 1, 2 and 30) recorded in Holman's 1715 inventory.
33. 'Undated catalogue of my father's MSS inv. per Dr Salmon', ERO, D/Y 1/3/132. For a biography of Salmon see M. Leach, 'Nathaniel Salmon (1675 -1742) historian of Hertfordshire, Surrey and Essex', *Transaction of the Essex Society for Archaeology & History*, fourth series, 7 (2016), pp.224-9.
34. There might be a connection with the Mr Holloway 'at the Coffin in Salisbury Court, London' who in 1736 was selling patent medicines for treating venereal diseases. Just over a year later Mrs Holloway, also of Salisbury Court, Fleet Street, London was running a business providing ballads, histories and riddle books, and offering her services for obtaining odd volumes of multi-volume publications. 'Daking' must have been a messenger or carrier who took other Holman material to Mr Holloway (see ERO, D/Y 1/3/132). Rawlinson was an avid collector of a wide range of MSS in London sales, including 'the pickings of chandlers, and grocers' waste paper' and it is feasible that he was a client of the Holloways. See R.M. Wiles, *Serial Publication in England before 1750* (Cambridge, 1957), p.222; *London Spy Revived*, editions of 29/11/1736 & 17/2/1738; W.D. Macray, *Annals of the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1890), pp.233-4.
35. All Souls College, Oxford, Codrington Library, MS 297. A further challenge would be to reconcile the items described by Holman with the shorter and less detailed descriptions in letters and other lists of loans, and to identify those that have survived in the Bodleian and British Libraries.

### Acknowledgements

This article is dedicated to Stan Newens who, amongst so many other contributions to the social and political life of Essex, has been a vigilant and tireless supporter of its local history. The author is deeply indebted to the county's antiquaries of the last three centuries, and for the rich cache of their letters and manuscripts held by the Essex Record Office.

### The Author

Michael Leach is a retired GP, and a local historian with a particular interest in the fragmentary evidence left by the network of antiquaries, both local and national, who collected material relating to the history of Essex.



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# Black Notley Watermill, its millers and their association with other Essex mills

by

Adrian Corder-Birch

**T**he Essex Mills Group was inaugurated in 1985 for mill enthusiasts to preserve wind, water, tide and steam mills in Essex and to defend their future. The group arranged visits to mills, collected historical and technical information, together with illustrations of mills and published regular newsletters. In 2019 Essex Mills Group was incorporated into Essex Industrial Archaeology Group, which has similar aims. The Mills Group was active for about 30 years during which time much valuable work was carried out. This included nearly 70 newsletters, containing significant information about the history of all types of mills in Essex. It is intended that this work will be continued by Essex Industrial Archaeology Group, which is a sub group of the Essex Society for Archaeology and History.

The author acquired a number of original photographs of the former Black Notley Water Mill and as very little was recorded about its history or millers he has researched and written this article. It is a tribute to the good work of Essex Mills Group of which he was a member. This article is also dedicated to Stan Newens who when an Essex Member of Parliament campaigned for the preservation of Essex mills.

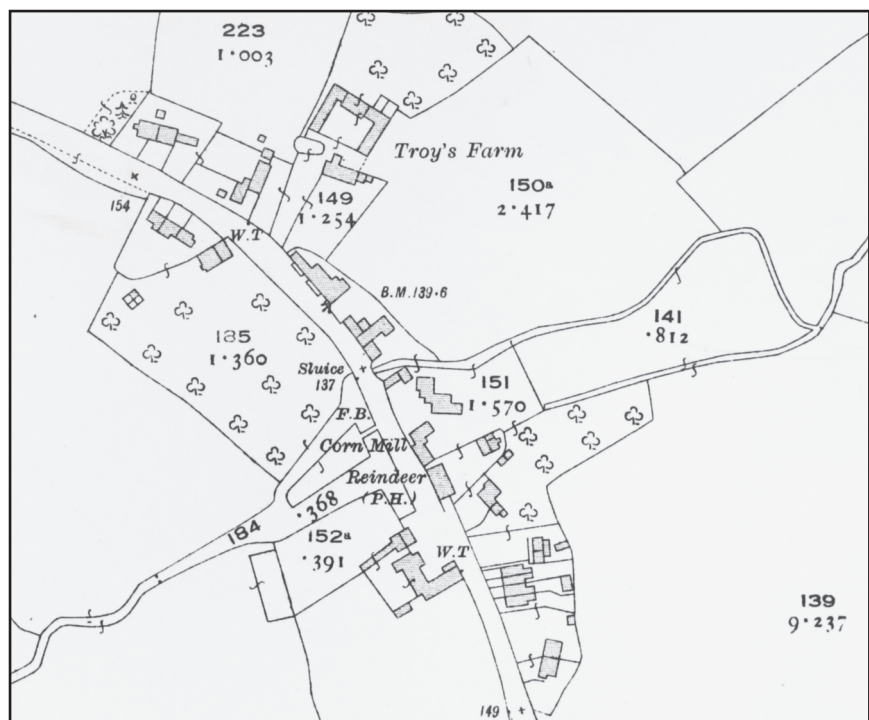
The article, which is principally about Black Notley Water Mill, also includes the association of its millers and their families, with other wind and watermills in Essex. It also illustrates that millers often fluctuated between wind and watermills, including tide mills, which they operated without difficulty.

## Description and location of Black Notley Watermill

The overshot watermill at Black Notley stood immediately north of the Reindeer Inn on the east side of Witham Road, also known as Notley Street. The mill was fed (not by a river) but by a pool on the opposite (west) side of the road.<sup>1</sup> The pool was fed by a small tributary of the river Brain and in the centre of the pool was an island with a footbridge across to connect the island with the road. The water to power the mill flowed under the road from the south side of the pool, through the mill and into a drain on the south side of plot 141. There was a sluice at the north eastern corner of the pool to control the height of the water which led into the natural stream and into the River Brain (Figs 1-3).<sup>2</sup> An overshot mill is

where the water enters at or near the top of the waterwheel to turn it round; therefore the level of the pool or mill head was higher than the waterwheel. By 1872 water power was supported by steam power to drive four pairs of French stones. The mill comprised three floors above ground level, the top floor being the lucam – the projecting loading gantry. There was a floor below ground level where the water wheel was situated. The mill was weather-board, painted white, with a red plain tiled mansard roof. This type of watermill almost invariably dates from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries<sup>3</sup> and Black Notley Watermill is no exception. The detached miller's house stood on the north side of the mill and included a bake house.

1. Map extract showing Black Notley Watermill.  
(Reproduced by courtesy of Essex Record Office,  
New Series 25" OS, sheet 35-9, 1919)





2. A postcard of Black Notley watermill showing the pool on the west side of the road, c.1910? (Author's collection)

### The Domesday Book and Feet of Fines

The Domesday Book recorded four mills in Notley (then one parish; now Black Notley and White Notley), but does not specify the types of mills. Two mills were clearly in what is now White Notley, one was in Black Notley and the location of the fourth mill is uncertain. The mill in Black Notley was held by Walter (surname not recorded) from Geoffrey de Mandeville and was extant in 1086, but did not exist before 1066. The fourth mill, which could have been in either Black or White Notley, was held by John FitzErmicion, from John FitzWaleran. This was recorded as 'always one mill' so existed before 1066 and was still extant in 1086.<sup>4</sup> Some extensive research by Bob Sier, a mill enthusiast, which includes water power along the River Brain, has concluded that the fourth mill was in Black Notley, where two mills were extant after 1066.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that one of these two mills was the predecessor of the watermill, which is the subject of this article.

The *Feet of Fines for Essex* has been searched from 1182 to 1603 and contains many references to various properties in Black Notley. However only the following entry specifically refers to a mill in Black Notley:

'In c.1261-1262 John de Mandeville quitclaimed to tenant and his successors all his right in one mill and two virgates of land with appurtenances in Blakenuttel (Black Notley), which Walter de Mandeville sometime held.'<sup>6</sup>

Although there were other references in the *Feet of Fines* to mills in 1346, 1363, 1563 and 1599, they also referred to other towns and villages in addition to Black Notley so the location of the mills is uncertain.

### Copyhold ownership through manorial records – the Nash family

Black Notley Watermill was copyhold of the Manor of Black Notley with Gubbyons and therefore much of the history of the mill's ownership can be traced through manorial records. By 1668 Joseph Nash, a miller of Barking, was the copyhold tenant and in February that year the mill and cottage was let to John Kimence, a miller of Pattiswick. The rent was £10 per annum payable by four instalments of 50 shillings each, with Joseph Nash being liable to repair and maintain. The description in the indenture is: 'All that his watermill being a corn mill with the appurtenances situate lying and being in Black Notley...all the water of the stream, river and millpond

running and flowing into the said mill and all the floodgates unto the mill belonging'<sup>7</sup>

Joseph Nash the elder was the customary tenant of the mill and on 20th December 1687 he was presented before the manorial court for being in default for non-repair.<sup>8</sup> He appeared again in 1688 in respect of an issue with a shed<sup>9</sup> and again in 1690 for non-repair of a causeway.<sup>10</sup> At a court held in May 1703 Joseph Nash the younger was admitted as joint customary tenant with his father upon the conditional surrender of Jacob Hanwick of Shalford.<sup>11</sup>

The mill was later let to John Mott and on 11th July 1709 Joseph Nash the younger was indicted at the Quarter Sessions for forcibly entering the watermill, which was in the possession of John Mott and ejecting him. John Mott gave evidence, although we do not know what the offence was, at the hearing at which Joseph Nash appeared, confessed and was fined 40 shillings.<sup>12</sup>

In 1723 Rettendon post mill at Buckhatch Lane, Rettendon was mortgaged for £30 to Joseph Nash then described as a miller of Wethersfield. The mortgage was assigned to William Nash, miller of Southminster in 1733.<sup>13</sup>

On 3rd July 1735 Joseph Nash surrendered the watermill and William Nash, the Southminster miller was admitted. The description (which remained very similar in future transactions) was:

the watermill with the houses outhouses and appurtenances, with pool and a small parcel or island of land within the pool containing 12 rods or thereabouts and the mill dam and a brew or parcel of soil or earth leading from the floodgates as far as an ash growing and being upon the corner of an orchard.<sup>14</sup>

At the Manorial Court held on 24th December 1737 William Nash surrendered the mill and on 10th August 1738 John Snow,





3. A photograph of Black Notley watermill looking east across the mill pool, c.1900?  
(Author's collection)

then an inn-holder of Black Notley and later a carpenter at Great Waltham, was admitted as copyhold tenant. The mill, outhouses and premises were occupied by Thomas Cranmer.

#### John Eldred

John Snow surrendered the mill at the Manorial Court held on 27th July 1751 when John Eldred, senior (c.1722-1794), a miller from Little Easton was admitted. Upon his admission he was required to pay a fine of £12 to the Lord and Lady of the Manor.<sup>15</sup> John Eldred had several children, including a daughter Martha and a son John Eldred, junior, by his wife Mary who died in April 1768. John Eldred senior owned several freehold and copyhold properties in Black Notley, including Rayleigh Meadow containing four acres. He made his last will on 7th December 1789, which contained details of each of these properties

and the description relating to the watermill was as follows:

All That my Watermill with the Houses Outhouses and appurtenances to the same belonging situate and being in Black Notley together with a Poole and a small Parcel or Island of Land within the said Poole containing Twelve Rods or thereabouts and the Mill Dam and a Brew or Parcel of Soil or Earth leading from the Flood Gates as far as an Ash growing and being upon the Corner of an Orchard heretofore belonging to John Lynch Gentleman And also free Liberty of Ingress Egress and Regress into or out of the Customary Lands heretofore of the said John Lynch to repair and amend the said Watermill and other the premises aforesaid and to do all necessities for repairing and sustaining the

same which said Watermill Houses Outhouses and Premises are now in my own occupation and holden of the Manor aforesaid by Copy of Court Roll...To hold all and every my aforesaid Freehold and Copyhold Hereditaments and Premises with their and every of their appurtenances unto my son John Eldred and to his Heirs and Assigns for ever.<sup>16</sup>

The will continued to provide that if John Eldred junior did not survive or have any issue, then the properties were to be inherited by the children of Martha Scott, the testator's daughter. Her husband Stephen Scott was the miller of the post mill at Cressing, which was demolished around 1900 and stood about 600 yards east of Bulford Water Mill on the west side of Mill Lane.<sup>17</sup> John Eldred senior died on 10th August 1794

aged 72 years and was buried in Black Notley Churchyard on 14th August 1794.<sup>18</sup> His will was proved by his son, John Eldred, junior as sole executor on 28th August 1794.<sup>19</sup>

John Eldred junior survived his father and inherited the watermill. At the Manorial Court held on 5th November 1794, John Eldred junior was admitted to the watermill and other premises in Black Notley devised to him by his father for which a fine of £30 was paid to the Lord of the Manor. John Eldred junior only occupied the watermill for four years and at the Manorial Court held on 27th June 1798 he was granted an absolute surrender of the watermill, pool, island, mill dam and land, which he had held off the manor at the yearly rent of 6s 8d.

### **Daniel Barnard and Edward Lewsey**

Daniel Barnard, a miller from Little Coggeshall was then admitted to the mill. His family were millers at Pointwell Water Mill, Coggeshall during the nineteenth century. At the Manorial Court held on 16th October 1808 Daniel Barnard, who was still described as a miller of Little Coggeshall, rather than of Black Notley, surrendered the mill and Edward Lewsey was admitted when a fine of £25 was paid. Whilst Edward Lewsey was the copyhold tenant, his under-tenant was David Lewsey. At the Court held on 14th April 1823 Edward Lewsey surrendered various properties in Black Notley pursuant to an absolute surrender dated 14th November 1821. This included the watermill to which William Scott was admitted when a fine of £27 was paid. The use of the mill by William Scott was subject to a conditional surrender by William Scott to James Challis Carter for security of £500 plus interest.<sup>20</sup>

Upon the surrender of William Scott on 24th October 1825 Thomas Butcher was admitted to the mill. On 26th

November 1826 Edward Lewsey surrendered an occupied tenement called Colebrooks, known by the sign of the Ranging Deer (later the Reindeer Public House adjoining the watermill) to Oliver Gosling, a brewer of Bocking.<sup>21</sup>

### **Thomas Butcher**

Thomas Butcher (c.1791–1861) who was admitted to the mill as copyhold tenant in 1825 remained the master miller until his death in 1861. He was born at Stebbing around 1791 and the Tithe Award for Black Notley of 1838<sup>22</sup> records Thomas Butcher as owner and occupier of the following properties amounting to one acre, two roods and 26 perches:

Mill Head & Island	0a 1r 19p
Stable, Shed & Yard	0a 0r 14p
Homestead	0a 2r 15p
Orchard	0a 2r 18p

During the 1840s and 1850s Thomas Butcher was assisted at the mill by his son George Butcher (1830–59).<sup>23</sup> George died at 28 years of age and was buried in Black Notley Churchyard on 16th May 1859.<sup>24</sup> Another son Thomas Butcher, junior, was a baker in Black Notley and presumably used flour ground by his father and brother.

Thomas Butcher senior made his last will on 30th May 1855 and appointed his son William Butcher of Sutton, Surrey, a carpenter and friend Thomas Hawkins Thomas, gentleman of Braintree as his executors. He died at Black Notley Mill on 13th August 1861 and on 7th September 1861 probate was granted by Ipswich District Probate Registry to his executors.<sup>25</sup>

### **Joseph Cooper**

On 22nd October 1861, the trustees surrendered the watermill to Joseph Cooper, a baker of Braintree. The consideration paid by Joseph Cooper to the trustees was £280 and the fine £30.<sup>26</sup> Joseph Cooper was the occupier from 1861 to 1872. He probably

sub-let the mill to Benjamin Garnham, who was recorded as the miller<sup>27</sup> and in occupation.<sup>28</sup> He was a native of Kersey, Suffolk who was supported by two sons, Robert and Alfred Garnham, as millers.<sup>29</sup> It was probably during their occupation that steam power was installed to provide ancillary power when water levels were low.

During early July 1872 the mill was advertised for sale by auction in one lot by Balls and Newman, auctioneers of Castle Hedingham and Rayne, to take place on 10th July 1872 at the Horn Hotel, Braintree. The description was as follows:

The valuable property, known as Black Notley Mill, comprising an overshot water and steam corn mill, driving four pairs of French stones and machinery, detached bake office in which there is a ten-bushel coal oven, respectable stowage, two gardens, paddock and yards containing in the whole about 1½ acres as now in the occupation of Messrs Pearson and Garnham, whose tenancy expires at Michaelmas next, when possession will be given. N.B. The whole of the machinery and fixtures will be included in the purchase.<sup>30</sup>

On 10th July 1872, Black Notley Mill was sold in one lot for £600 to William King Digby, a furniture dealer of High Street, Maldon.<sup>31</sup> On 10th October 1872 the manorial minute book records that Joseph Cooper's watermill was sold by the mortgagors. A conditional surrender was made by Joseph Cooper on 25th October 1872.<sup>32</sup>

During December 1874 the Mill was advertised for sale upon the instructions of the mortgagees. The auctioneer was Albert Prime Clear of Maldon and London and the solicitors Digby, Son and Evans of Maldon. The auction took place on 16th December 1874 at the Horn



Hotel, Braintree in two lots the description being as follows:

**Lot 1.** The valuable property, which is principally freehold known as Black Notley Mill comprising an overshot water and steam corn mill driving four pairs of French stones and machinery, detached bake office and ten bushel coal oven, extensive out-buildings and stowage, respectable and commodious dwelling-house and offices, stables, yard, two gardens and small paddock, containing together with the site of the buildings about 1½ acres in the occupation of Joseph Cooper most eligibly situate for trade, adjoining the high-road about 2 miles from the town and railway station of Braintree.

**Lot 2.** Also a Ten-Horse power condensing beam engine and boiler 'Middleson' with driving wheel and strap.<sup>33</sup>

The minutes record the admission of William King Digby of Maldon on 25th October 1872 and that £300 was due to the Liquidator of The South Essex Equitable Insurance and Advance Company Limited. The conditional surrender to the Liquidator was forfeited and William King Digby was admitted copyhold tenant on 20th September 1883.<sup>34</sup>

### Henry Chopping

During Digby's ownership his tenants were Henry Chopping & Son.<sup>35</sup> Henry Chopping was born at Little Canfield c.1826, a son of John Chopping who was the miller at Little Canfield and later at Matching, where he operated post mills at both locations. A visitor to Little Canfield mill in 1919, recorded inscriptions, near the stone-floor level, including 'T. Chopping 1824' and 'H. Chopping Sep 20 1847'.<sup>36</sup> Little Canfield Mill stopped working in 1897, was pulled down in 1930 and the round-house had disappeared by 1935.<sup>37</sup> Members of the Chopping family

were also millers at Stebbing, Fingringhoe, Middle Mill at Colchester and Chipping Hill at Witham.<sup>38</sup>

Upon leaving Little Canfield Mill, Henry Chopping became the master miller at Roxwell in 1852, where he leased both a windmill and a watermill, which were run jointly and only 180 yards apart. His main claim to fame was as inventor of the annular (wheel) sail for windmills. Henry initially set up a model with an annular sail at his father's mill at Matching, which he demonstrated to local millwrights and around 1858 constructed a full size annular sail at Roxwell windmill. An annular sail or wind wheel is a circular sail consisting of a ring of radially-disposed vanes which could be either remotely controlled and pivoted on an iron frame or permanently fixed to an iron frame. It was approximately 52ft in diameter and incorporated wooden frames of about 7ft lengths covered with canvas. He replaced the ordinary sails, which had blown off in a storm, c.1860, with his new annular sail. Apparently the new sails were able to drive four pairs of stones, which was more than any other post mill in Essex.<sup>39</sup> When the Roxwell mills were advertised for sale in 1866 the windmill included a wheel sail, patent shutters and improved wind tackle. It was claimed that the annular sail could survive bad weather.<sup>40</sup> He eventually patented his design in 1868 under the names of Frederick Warner and himself and assigned his provisional patent to John Warner & Sons Limited of Cricklewood. He estimated that annular sails generated some 20hp.<sup>41</sup>

At Roxwell he employed two millers and two apprentice millers. The millers were his son George and 71 year old father John, making three generations of one family operating the mills together. The apprentices were Thomas Watson and Harry Archer.<sup>42</sup> Walter, another son of Henry was later employed

as a miller at Roxwell.<sup>43</sup> In 1866 Henry Chopping was succeeded at Roxwell by John Shepherd Ray (1844-98). The post mill ceased working in about 1890 and the water mill was continued by Ernest, son of John Ray until 1914.<sup>44</sup>

In 1866 Chopping purchased Thorington Post Mill and the nearby Thorington Tide Mill for £1,500, with a mortgage of £1300 from Harriet Cooper, widow of the former miller, Henry Cooper. The property included 19 acres of land and the mill house.<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately the post mill was destroyed in a gale on 16th December 1869. A detailed report of the gale, efforts to save the mill and the resulting damage appeared in the *Essex Weekly News* of 24th December 1869.<sup>46</sup> In 1870 the mills reverted into the possession of the Cooper family consequent upon Henry Chopping's default in payment of the mortgage. He left Thorington during 1870 and by 1871 was living at Great Bromley where his occupation was recorded as 'a miller out of business'.<sup>47</sup>

Kenneth Farries described Henry Chopping as 'indefatigable and incorrigible...when despite his penchant for wind power was in occupation of the watermill'.<sup>48</sup> Henry Chopping occupied the Watermill and Mill House at Black Notley with his family by the mid 1870s until spring 1881. In 1877 his furniture and milling stock was auctioned under a distress for rent.<sup>49</sup> During October and November 1877 bankruptcy proceedings were pending against him when he was described as a miller, baker and brickmaker.<sup>50</sup> He was discharged and assisted at the mill by a younger son Walter Salmon Chopping, a 'millers-man', who resided with his parents. Henry and Walter traded at Black Notley as Henry Chopping & Son and left shortly after the census, which took place on 3rd April 1881.

In March 1881, Henry Chopping purchased a smock mill at Great Dunmow. It was known as Lambert's Mill after a previous

owner. At the auction, it was knocked down to Henry Chopping then of Black Notley for £345.<sup>51</sup> He survived as the miller at Lambert's Mill until 1886 when his mortgagees took possession and sold it to Robert Hasler of Throws Mill, Little Dunmow for £350.<sup>52</sup> The mill became derelict following Henry Chopping's departure, the fittings were sold in 1896 and the mill later demolished.<sup>53</sup>

Henry Chopping's final mill, which he occupied between 1886 and 1890, was Pebmarsh Post Mill. He died in the nearby Mill House on 21st March 1890 aged 69. The mill was advertised for sale by auction at the George Hotel, Halstead on 6th May 1890 and included patent sails.<sup>54</sup> Unfortunately the mill did not sell and was withdrawn at £130.<sup>55</sup> Throughout his life he had been an occasional contributor to *The Miller* and was frequently involved in litigation, but the court cases were far too numerous to include in this article.

### Alfred Legerton

During mid 1881 Alfred Thomas Legerton (1851-1918) became the occupier and last master miller at Black Notley Watermill (Fig 4). He was born at Sible Hedingham on 28th April 1851, a son of Samuel Legerton (1798-1859) and Hannah Legerton formerly Gatward (1805-79). Samuel Legerton was a farmer of 123 acres at Hole Farm, Sible Hedingham, where he employed four labourers.<sup>56</sup> He died on 19th December 1859 at Sible Hedingham leaving effects of under £800.<sup>57</sup>

Alfred was educated at a small private day and boarding school at Bridge End, Great Bardfield where he was one of four boarders in the household of Thomas Mace, the schoolmaster.<sup>58</sup> Upon leaving school, Alfred became a miller employed by Charles Metson (1827-98) at Cut Maple Post Mill, Sible Hedingham, where he had been miller since 1859. The Metson family became well known farmers and millers

of both wind and watermills. During the 1840s Charles was an apprentice miller to Samuel Barnard the occupier of Daw Street Windmill, Waltham Cross, Finchingfield, which was demolished about 1914. Around the early 1850s Charles was employed as the miller at the Post Mill, Toppesfield, until acquiring Hulls Mill, a watermill located on the border of Sible Hedingham and Great Maplestead.

Charles and later his son Maurice Metson were owners of Purls Hill Windmill at Great Maplestead, which stood about 600 yards north east of Hulls Water Mill.<sup>59</sup> This windmill was demolished during the late nineteenth century and their activities then concentrated upon Hulls Water Mill. They became one of the first millers to introduce the roller system and the installation of this expensive plant brought Hulls Roller Flour Mills, as it became known, up to date.<sup>60</sup> Upon the death of Charles Metson in 1898, his son Maurice continued to operate Hulls Roller Flour Mills until his death in 1900 when his widow and executrix sold the mill and over 62 acres of land. The mill was advertised as containing four floors, the roller system and five pairs of French burr stones driven by either water or steam power.<sup>61</sup>

By the late 1880s Charles Metson also owned the Tower Mill, Lamb Lane, Sible Hedingham, which was worked by wind and latterly by an auxiliary 8hp steam engine. This was a substantial tower mill, built in 1825 with 900,000 red bricks and timber from a post mill, which formerly stood on the site. The last miller was Arthur Samuel Metson, a grandson of Charles, who ceased working the mill in 1916 and it was demolished in 1923.<sup>62</sup>

Cut Maple mill was inherited by Henry, son of Charles, who ceased milling in 1915 and it was eventually demolished in 1956. It was previously known as Legerton's Mill and was situated near the beginning of the cart

track leading to Hole Farm. Until 1782 Micah Corder (1712-82) was tenant of this leasehold mill and he bequeathed it to his second wife Anna Corder formerly Greenwood (1738-1810) for her life and then to their son Joseph Corder (1769-1840).<sup>63</sup> Thomas Legerton became the owner-occupier by 1820. The mill, which previously stood on land owned by the Sparrow family of Gosfield Place, was moved on rollers some 50 or 60 yards onto Legerton's land, following removal of the gear. He died in 1845 when his executors auctioned the property.<sup>64</sup> The next occupiers were the brothers Frederick and Horace Legerton, who were recorded as millers and beer retailers.<sup>65</sup> The Mill House eventually, became the Windmill Public House, which continued until the 1950s. Horace Legerton was a journeyman corn miller.<sup>66</sup>

By 1871 Alfred was 19 years of age and a miller, living at Hole Farm with his widowed mother, Hannah Legerton, a farmer of 128 acres employing five men.<sup>67</sup> The farm was later continued by John Legerton, an elder brother of Alfred, until it was sold to the Sparrow family. It was occupied by Charles Metson and later by his sons Alfred and Henry Metson. On 3rd September 1919 the executors of Charles Metson sold Tower Mill, ten cottages in Sible Hedingham and Hurrells Farm at Toppesfield. On the same day the Rev Basil Sparrow-Beridge sold Hole Farm comprising 107 acres in the occupation of Alfred and Henry Metson,<sup>68</sup> which was thereafter owned and farmed by Alfred Metson, who was also an agricultural machinist. His brother Henry continued as miller, farmer and beer retailer at the Windmill Public House, Cut Maple. Another brother, Frederick Metson, was the innkeeper and a cow-keeper at the Sugar Loaves Public House, Sible Hedingham.

Alfred Legerton was miller at Cut Maple mill, employed by Charles Metson, until 1881.<sup>69</sup>





**4. The Mill House, Black Notley. Alfred Legerton is standing on the left with his wife Annie Legerton (née Spurgeon). This and the previous photograph were possibly taken on the same occasion as the unknown gentleman in the dark suit appears in both. (Author's collection)**

By the time of Alfred's marriage later that year, he was the master miller at Black Notley. On 27th October 1881 at Castle Hedingham Chapel, Alfred Thomas Legerton married Ann Rebecca Spurgeon, known as Annie, of the Post Office, Swan Street, Sible Hedingham. She was born in the village in 1845 and was the only daughter of Joseph and Rebecca Spurgeon. Joseph and later his son John were postmasters, grocers, drapers and registrar of marriages.<sup>70</sup>

In April 1883 Black Notley Mill was advertised for sale by order of the mortgagees, the liquidators of the South Essex Equitable Investment and Advance Company Limited. The auctioneers were Balls and Newman and the solicitors Crick and Freeman of Maldon. The auction was arranged for 2nd May 1883 at the Horn Hotel, Braintree. The sale particulars were similar to earlier descriptions

with the addition of the property being in the occupation of Alfred Legerton, a yearly mid-summer tenant at £35 per annum.<sup>71</sup> At the auction on 2nd May 1883, bidding went up to £350 when the property was withdrawn.<sup>72</sup>

Around 1888 Alfred employed Henry Sharpe as a miller and George Holland as a labourer. A later employee was W. Smith who placed the following advertisement: 'TO MILLERS SITUATION WANTED by young man, age 25, as general miller or could take charge of small mill. Address: W. Smith, Black Notley Mill, Braintree.'<sup>73</sup>

Alfred supplied malt as well as corn and flour. He had stables and kept horses and wagons to collect corn and deliver flour and malt. The 1891, 1901 and 1911 census returns,<sup>74</sup> record Alfred as a corn miller at Black Notley Mill with Alfred and Annie living in the Mill House. They had no children, but for many years a

niece, Emily Smith of Great Bardfield lived with them. In December 1894, Alfred was elected onto Black Notley Parish Council at the first elections following the Local Government Act 1894 and became vice chairman. He retired as miller and corn merchant but continued to live at Black Notley Mill House until his death there on 1st April 1918, following a long illness, aged 66 years. His widow then returned to the Spurgeon family home at Sible Hedingham where she died on 1st May 1922 aged 76 years. They were buried in Black Notley Churchyard on 5th April 1918 and 5th May 1922 respectively.<sup>75</sup>

After milling ceased the watermill building became a garage until it was demolished early 1939, just before the beginning of the Second World War.<sup>76</sup> The pool, which once fed the watermill, was filled in and a

dwelling named 'Tarecroft' was built on the site. The stream now runs along the northern edge under the road and continues into the natural stream. The whole area has disappeared under post war housing.

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## The Author

Adrian Corder-Birch, DL, FSA, is chairman of the Editorial Board of *Essex Journal* and immediate past president of the Essex Society for Archaeology & History. He is a member of the Court of the University of Essex and vice chairman of Essex Industrial Archaeology Group. He is delighted to dedicate this article to Stan Newens who has always taken a great interest in the preservation of Essex mills.



# The 1892 General Election in the Harwich Constituency: Rural radicalism and the candidature of Robert Varty

by  
Ted Woodgate

On a spring evening in 1885 at Newport in north-west Essex men belonging to the local branch of The National Agricultural Labourers Union (NALU) awaited the arrival of their district secretary, the Sawston shopkeeper Arthur Challis. The agricultural depression that was to destroy the prosperity of Essex farmers was by now well-established and the union was struggling as a consequence. By 1885 such meetings were mainly convened to bolster flagging morale and to warn against the dire prospects if the men contemplated giving up membership. This meeting, however, was to be different. Nationally spirits had been raised the previous year with the passing of The Third Reform Act by Gladstone's Liberal government. A General Election was imminent, and these Newport labourers would, for the first time, be qualified to vote in the newly created North Essex (Saffron Walden) division. Challis brought with him a 'mock' ballot box and 'mock' ballot papers each labelled William Gladstone and Lord Salisbury. The procedures of making a cross by the preferred candidate and insertion of the paper into the slot on the box were carefully explained and then each man was issued with a paper and invited to 'vote' secretly. That such basic operations needed demonstration to adults shocks twenty first century sophistication and is a telling comment on the lack of educational opportunity available to the nineteenth century proletariat. It was, however, another issue that concerned Challis more. When the 'votes' were counted, all but one man had voted for

Gladstone. Animated conversation followed and questions were posed. Who was the sole Conservative supporter? Challis then revealed that it was he who had voted for Salisbury but was at pains to explain that had he not admitted doing so they would have been none the wiser. The simple principle of the secrecy of the ballot had been proved. Two weeks later a mock election at the Belchamp St Paul branch where the result was 42 to 1 in favour of the Liberals suggests that Challis's tactic was widespread.<sup>1</sup> These incidents, reported in The English Labourers Chronicle, the weekly organ of the union, also reflects the effectiveness of the political message conveyed by the leadership at both local and national level. The membership was constantly informed that the Liberals deserved support as they had granted the franchise and the Conservatives, the traditional party of the employers, had resisted the measure consistently throughout a long campaign. It was a message that clearly had an impact in parts of the county where the union had been strong, but it is also important to remember that in 1885 NALU members were in a minority in the county so the impact and results were variable.

The Third Reform Act of 1884 extended the parliamentary franchise to 38,537 new voters in Essex.<sup>2</sup> All of these were male, and the vast majority were agricultural labourers. When a General Election was called the following year the county press speculated, with some animation, on how these new voters would affect results. The re-organisation of constituency boundaries, which accompanied the 1884

Act, made this a difficult question. Would the deferential workforce, still influenced by a paternalistic gentry, vote Conservative or, in the villages that had been subject to radical movements in the past and were now influenced by trade unionism, would they opt for the Liberals? In north Essex where NALU had been particularly influential since 1872, the Liberals won two seats. Herbert Gardner triumphed in the Saffron Walden division with a comfortable majority of 1,749 and in the Maldon division Albert Kitching defeated his Conservative opponent by 631 votes. The results at Saffron Walden and Maldon helped Gladstone return to office but the balance of power in the new parliament was held by the Irish Parliamentary party led by Charles Stewart Parnell. As a consequence, Gladstone attempted to introduce a Home Rule Bill for Ireland which split his party apart and led to another General Election only seven months afterwards. Those elements of Gladstone's party that disagreed with the prospect of Home Rule, the Liberal Unionists, now joined with the Conservatives who were returned to office. In this election of July 1886, the Liberal Gardner once again won in Saffron Walden but with a marked reduction in his majority. In Maldon, which in modern parlance would be considered a 'marginal' seat, the Greenstead Green farmer C.W. Gray won the seat for the Conservatives.

The frustration of the NALU leadership must have been acute. The early 1880s saw membership decline drastically as the agricultural depression deepened. Great hopes had been invested in the

campaign for the franchise for farm workers. Joseph Arch, the union President, had won North West Norfolk for the Liberals in 1885 thanks largely to the votes of unionised labourers. Within seven months he lost the seat.

Across East Anglia there seemed to be evidence that a bewildered and disillusioned workforce, more concerned with their own livelihood than the fate of Ireland, abstained in July 1886. The depression became more severe, the union declined even in its strongest parishes and the new Conservative and Liberal Unionist government would be secure for the next six years. The prospects for any kind of radical political advance appeared distinctly bleak.

Unforeseen events in the East End of London however presaged a remarkable reversal in radical prospects. The Bryant and May match women, the Beckton gas workers and 100,000 London dockers over the course of 1888 and 1889 conducted successful industrial actions which proved a powerful inspiration to unskilled workers to organise during a brief interlude in the depression as the labour market tightened and unemployment eased. During the hay harvest of 1890 'a man from Grays' re-established the NALU branch at South Ockendon, commonly regarded as the strongest in Essex before the depression. The proximity of Grays to the new dock at Tilbury, which had participated in the successful Dock strike, may well have been a significant factor since the dockers union made it a priority to aid unionise unskilled labourers in their vicinity to minimise the future possibility of strike breaking. The renaissance at South Ockendon lit the flame. By the end of 1891 David Sage who had been the district secretary of NALU in South Essex had boosted membership by a claimed 1,335 and then in the 29 weeks leading up to polling day in the General Election of 1892, increased that by a further 1,882.

Most of these were based in the 51 branches in North Essex. As a consequence, the Liberal cause in the county was able to turn to the solidly Gladstonian national and regional union leadership now imbued with new hope and purpose, looking to rekindle the political atmosphere of 1885.

The campaign in Essex in 1892 promised to be of great interest for agricultural labourers. The Conservatives, disappointed by their performance in rural constituencies in 1885, had in government introduced legislation in education, smallholdings provision, local government (County Councils were introduced in 1888) and were even considering proposals on old age pensions in an attempt to gain favour with the rural working class. In January 1892 they organised a national conference at Ely to specifically examine issues of relevance to farm workers. For their part the Liberals, aware of the rising influence of militant trade unionism and socialist groups, had refashioned their radical offer by promising to extend local government to the villages via parish councils. This issue would be a key feature for Liberal candidates in rural divisions. Although the 1885 election had introduced many of the features of modern campaigning, strict adherence to a national manifesto by individual candidates, particularly among Liberals, was not noticeable. According to Patricia Lynch

Liberal candidates in rural constituencies could make one of two choices: they could either focus on the policies laid out by their party leaders (which for much of this period meant Gladstone's project of Home Rule), thus ignoring rural concerns, or they could take an independent line and advocate reforms of particular importance to their constituents...candidates who chose the latter course

could often do extremely well in rural areas, in certain cases even surpassing their party's performance at the polls in 1885.<sup>3</sup>

Despite this indication, the national leadership of the party were reluctant to pursue rural issues at a national level mainly through fear of alienating their more traditional middle-class support. This tension between the two wings of the party would be reflected in the Harwich division in 1892.

In the Saffron Walden (North Essex) division in 1892 Herbert Gardner very much pursued an independent line based on the goodwill he had built up over the past seven years of his incumbency. Although not a radical (he was very cautious about being seen as too close to NALU), Gardner had won great respect among the farm workers of the division: 'he agitated for parish councils, used his political influence to protect cottage brewers from taxation, and sponsored bills for the use of village schoolrooms for political meetings.'<sup>4</sup> He also strongly associated with local tenant farmers with his patronage of the Essex Tithe Reform Association which attracted prominent previous supporters from the Liberal Unionist and Conservative parties. His reward was an 8% swing back to the Liberals which gave him a majority 136 larger than in 1885. In the Maldon (East Essex) division Gray, the Conservative MP, was challenged by a lawyer, Cyril Dodd, who 'under Arch's tutelage had made an open alliance with the NALU.'<sup>5</sup> It was in this division that the recent revival of union fortunes was most marked particularly at Coggeshall, Earls Colne, Kelvedon, Rayne, Terling and Gt Tey. William Crowe, a member from Kelvedon, had been a proposer for Dodd at his adoption meeting and one of the seconders was Mike Dalton, a former union auditor from Coggeshall. In addition, branch

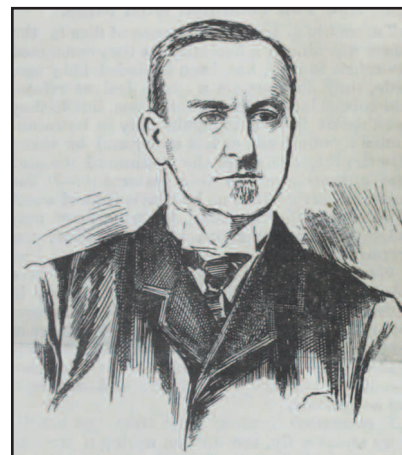


secretaries from Stisted, Bannister Green, Rayne and Panfield were among the assenters. Arch (once again the candidate for North West Norfolk) and Dodd spoke on common platforms. In this more volatile seat, the 3.6 % swing back to the Liberals was enough to win the contest for Dodd.

Against all expectations it was the Harwich (North East Essex) division that produced most of the drama in Essex in 1892. In 1885 James Round (Fig 1), who had been the Conservative MP for the constituency under its previous incarnation since 1868, was returned with a comfortable majority of 760. A much-respected Colchester man and a notable first class cricketer, Round proved untroubled by the influx of new working class voters unlike his party colleagues in Saffron Walden and Maldon. The turnout of 82.9% suggests that agricultural labourers were as enthusiastic about their new status as they were in other parts of the county but the Liberal party here was less attractive. The Tendring district had a solid radical history. Kirby-le-Soken and villages nearby had featured strongly in the Captain Swing disturbances in 1830. Soon after the Tolpuddle Martyrs were pardoned in 1836 farm workers in Layer-de-la-Haye, Thorpe-le-Soken, Peldon, Gt Bentley and Lt Bromley formed a short-lived trade union and in the mid 1840s the troubled village of West Bergholt suffered a spate of incendiarism far worse than any other Essex parish. Perhaps surprisingly Arch's union found progress in the district distinctly difficult in the 1870s with only branches on the western fringes of the parliamentary constituency (Fordham, Gt Horkesley, Layer-de-la-Haye, Layer Breton, West Bergholt, West Mersea and Wormingford) solidly established. As a consequence, James Jackson the Liberal candidate in 1885 lacked the support and backing of NALU officials and members so critical in other parts of North

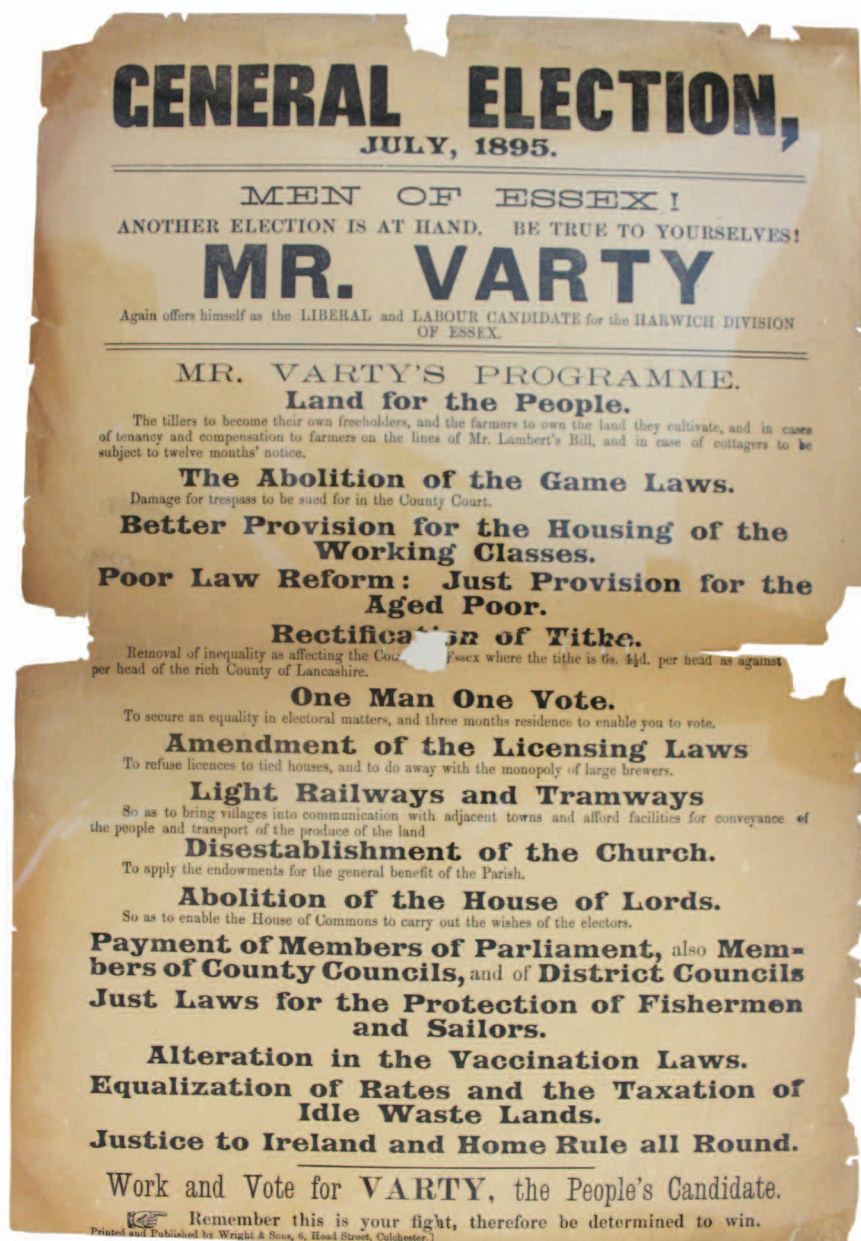
Essex. The situation seven months later in July 1886 was, of course, much the same but with the change in the political mood nationally Round was returned with a massive 2,301 majority by the same electorate. The 68.5% turnout in the Harwich division on this occasion however may well have been significant, representing a decline of 14.4%. The prospect of an election in 1892 would, as a consequence, have raised few fears for Conservatives in north east Essex. Harwich appeared to be the safest seat in the county and the Liberals would require a 'swing' of 18% to unseat Round. As has already been pointed out however, a brief lull in the relentlessness of the depression had been accompanied by the success of the new unskilled trade unions in east London and a revival of NALU in Essex. The influential branches west of Colchester such as West Bergholt, the Layers and Wormingford once again had impetus but, more significantly, a general 'New Unionist' union had appeared in Ipswich and had been busily recruiting agricultural workers in the Tendring Hundred where NALU had no previous presence. This Eastern Counties Labour Federation (ECLF) led by Joseph Robinson had established branches in 17 parishes by the spring of 1892 and claimed to have enrolled 846 labourers. In 13 of these their radical pro Liberal message was, possibly for the first time, being broadcast by a grassroots movement to working class voters in Ardleigh, Boxted, Beaumont, Dedham, Gt Bromley, Gt Oakley, Gt Bentley, Langham, Mistley, Tendring, Weeley and in Colchester, Parson's Heath and Shrub End. Despite this potentially encouraging development for the Liberal candidate chosen to oppose Round the task that would confront him remained considerable (Fig 2).

With polling scheduled for July the chosen one, Robert Varty, was introduced to the electorate by *The Essex Weekly*



**1. James Round, MP.**  
(Reproduced by courtesy  
of the Essex Record Office,  
D/DRh F28, extract from  
*The Cable*, 24/08/1895, p.121.)

*News* as early as their first edition of February. It reported that he had 'a good many irons in the fire'.<sup>6</sup> He was a manager at the Middlesex Bank residing at Jarvis Hall in Benfleet. Within the past two years he had acquired 2,000 plots of now abandoned farmland on the Vange Hills estate near Pitsea railway station which were being marketed to people from the East End of London, the early plotlands. He also owned three estates which were due for building development at Thundersley and South Benfleet and a 150-acre estate 'adjoining Southend'. 'In politics Mr. Varty goes the whole length of the Radical programme'.<sup>7</sup> The staunchly Conservative *Essex Standard* went even further observing that Varty had 'some peculiar opinions' and labelling him as 'the Liberal and Labour candidate'.<sup>8</sup> The opinions of both newspapers were endorsed by Varty's reported comments at a meeting early in March at Clacton when he launched a sustained attack against the Conservative government's Allotment Act which he considered far too expensive a proposition for farm workers and suggested a solution of his own to the 'land problem'. 'Thirty six men own 6,740,000 acres in England, Scotland and Ireland so there is scope to spare some on reasonable terms for labourers, perhaps all that had been stolen



2. Poster issued in support of Varty at the 1895 Harwich election. His radical policy position remained much as it had been but for him, unfortunately, political developments meant he had lost much support by 1895.

(Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office, D/DRh F28)

from the people originally. He was for redistribution not nationalisation.<sup>9</sup> The use of the word 'stolen' referring to the actions of those whose ancestors had benefited from the enclosure movement placed Varty's view of social history in a strongly unequivocal manner and gave a firm signal as to whose side he was on in rural society. His stressing of 'redistribution' is retrospectively of interest during this period as the boundaries between radical liberalism and socialist doctrine began to blur.

In this same election James Keir Hardie, who was to become the first socialist MP by winning West Ham South, fully backed nationalisation of the land.

Responding to the excitement of the newly enfranchised voters in the villages the 1885 candidates from both parties had instituted public meetings, often accompanied by resolutions of support, as their principal method of broadcasting their message. The pattern was well established by 1892 but *The Essex Weekly News* noticed that, in addition to

attending a prodigious number of meetings Varty also 'spends his days in talking to the labourers'.<sup>10</sup> In front of a crowded audience at Brightlingsea in the middle of May he claimed to have already travelled through 50 villages, been in hundreds of cottages and shaken hands with thousands of working men. He even claimed that this particular meeting was his fourteenth in as many days. However one may question Varty's arithmetic, his enthusiasm appeared boundless and earned him acclaim from *The Essex Weekly News* at the conclusion of the campaign for 'an object lesson in electioneering'.<sup>11</sup> According to Arthur Brown, Varty was quite open about his objectives with this type of campaigning; 'It was the cottager he wished to speak to. The man in the big house could take care of himself, if he wished to vote for him he could do so'.<sup>12</sup> He informed a meeting at Gt Bentley that prominent Liberals had told him, 'You go too far...you are too much in favour of the agricultural labourer'.<sup>13</sup> In late June the *Essex Standard* remarked that such gentlemen were 'conspicuous by their absence' at a Varty meeting in Gt Oakley.<sup>14</sup> In this context it is perhaps significant that at the end of April The Home Counties Division of the National Liberal Foundation announced a high level campaign in Essex for 20 major venues. None of them were directed to the Harwich division. Either Varty's behaviour had already alienated the Liberal establishment, or they prejudged him a hopeless cause in opposition to Round, or perhaps the decision was based on simple financial expediency. Whatever the true reason it explains Varty's comment following the announcement of the result at Colchester Town Hall that James Wicks (the defeated Liberal candidate in 1886) had been the only senior local party figure to have assisted his campaign.



This class-based politics was unusual for the time and clearly caused unease among the county elites who realised its potential social impact. A report in the *Essex Telegraph* on Varty, discussing a recent poaching case in which gamekeepers had been murdered and the culprits executed, was particularly noticeable. In the context of urging the abolition of the game laws to his Wivenhoe audience Varty had accused the Home Secretary of being the real murderer and when he referred to the death of the gamekeepers, a comment came from the floor: 'a pity it was not their master'.<sup>15</sup> There is no indication that this accorded with Varty's view but clearly the fact that it was uttered at his meeting left him open to attack. Two months later at a Weeley meeting Varty utilised a comment by Round concerning an announced engagement between a daughter of Queen Victoria and a German prince which the Conservative candidate hoped 'would gladden the sorrowful heart of the Queen'. Firstly, Varty announced the engagement of 'another' princess to 'another' German prince and went on that he 'wished other hearts to be gladdened. The heart of the wife or widow of some agricultural labourer...when she knew that her daughter was affianced to a man who had a good freehold or an allotment in a respectable state of repair to live in'.<sup>16</sup> Using this issue to highlight the social problems of the poor was not of course advocacy of republicanism and was certainly not as obviously anti-monarchy as the famous verbal assault on the Prince of Wales delivered by Keir Hardie in the Commons in 1894, but in an age of more open deference it was a tactic not normally employed by mainstream Liberals. As the campaign progressed with reports of crowded and enthusiastic meetings in favour of Varty even the prospect of an unexpected and unlikely victory failed to persuade more prosperous Liberals to lend their support.

Varty was, however, able to call on other sources of support. The touring Liberal van which took the party's message to the villages and organised open-air meetings fulfilled a vital propaganda feature during the long evenings of early summer. When it arrived in Layer-de-la-Haye Varty spoke on the same platform as Joseph Robinson the leader of the ECLF trade union. Robinson appeared on the same platform with Varty on the van on another two occasions. At West Bergholt Varty expressed pride in Robinson's support and devoted his speech to labourers' issues concluding with a sarcastic reference to the ancient connection between the despised tithe payments with one tenth of agricultural production. 'It was a crying scandal that the parson should have the handling of the charities and give them to those who came to the church.' He supported the abolition of the Game Laws, disestablishment and disendowment of the Church and 'if the parson wanted tithes he should work for them and go one day out of ten to the plough'.<sup>17</sup> The association with Robinson was considerably reinforced a month later when it was reported that the lord of the manor at Gt Bentley was taking action against individuals using the village green for their horses and donkeys. As a reaction to this potential threat of enclosure Robinson called an 'indignation meeting' and a successful defence committee was appointed. The effectiveness of the union action helped, indirectly, to raise the profile of Varty's politics at a crucial point.

In the early part of the year the Conservative opposition to Varty appeared somewhat bewildered by personal aspects of the Liberal candidate rather than either his reception by the local working class or the nature of his policies. An editorial in the *Essex Standard* declared that he was 'not the sort of man whom one would suspect of the slightest

ambition to get into the House of Commons'.<sup>18</sup> His northern accent also attracted rather disapproving remarks about the way in which he dropped 'h's and g's'<sup>19</sup> and his request for 'vawts'.<sup>20</sup> If, at this stage, these comments were expressions of curiosity they would rapidly escalate as polling day approached into a full scaled personal assault in some sectors of the local press. Local Conservatives had plenty of opportunities to identify policy issues outlined by Varty with which they disagreed. Speaking at a Primrose League meeting at Gt Horkesley, Captain Kelso RN firstly outlined the objectives of the association; the maintenance of religion and emphasis on religious education, the union between England and Ireland and the importance of the monarchy. He then contrasted this programme with Varty's policy objectives; disestablishment, free education (in the sense of free from religious input), and support for Fenianism, militant Irish nationalism. In the midst of this attack he was dismissed as a 'Londoner', perhaps as an explanation of why he held such outlandish views.<sup>21</sup> Varty's position on Ireland was frequently pointed out by Conservatives who noted that Home Rule often appeared as the last item on his policy statements. Although this made eminent sense with regard to those whom he was trying most to approach, his opponents were anxious to indicate that there was some distance between the Harwich Liberal candidate and the national party led by Gladstone. The criticism was levelled again in the *Essex Standard* following the publication of Varty's Address to the Electors but on this occasion the editorial concentrated on questioning his proposal of payment for MPs and County Councillors and a suggestion for a mitigation of distress caused by the agricultural depression. According to Varty, with so much land uncultivated and £140 million worth of food being imported annually,

a major redistribution of land to create a peasant economy similar to that existing in France could be the answer.<sup>22</sup> It would have been little surprise that in response the *Essex Standard* urged the greatest caution for such a proposal.

It was not until June 3rd that James Round publicly entered into the campaign at an open air meeting in Gt Horkesley with 'agricultural labourers present in large numbers.'<sup>23</sup> His speech concentrated on his disapproval of Home Rule, an explanation for the agricultural depression and an assurance that once normality was restored labourers would experience raised wages. He also mentioned the possibility that if his party were returned to government the introduction of Old Age Pensions would be considered, reflecting that it was a great pity that in the workhouses of Essex the 'industrious' working class were mixed up with the 'unthrifty'.<sup>24</sup> It was noticeable however that Round talked only of policy and made no reference to Varty as an individual and pursued this attitude consistently. Varty fully reciprocated this honourable approach. At the same meeting, however, Captain Kelso once again referred to Varty as an unknown Londoner with Fenian sympathies. There was no evidence from the local press to back up this latter claim and no attempt was made to explain how such sympathies were in accord with the often-noticed fact that he seemed reluctant to discuss Ireland at all.

As the last few weeks of the campaign got under way the slightly mocking observations of the Liberal candidate were magnified into a major ad hominem assault as the *Essex Standard* unleashed the 'biography' of Varty. His family background was questioned, and his father accused of being 'a pugilistic rate collector.' His religious position as a non-conformist was implicitly attacked as he was accused of 'maligning' a

Penrith clergyman. Alleged shady deals in Liverpool arranged through his position as manager of the Middlesex Bank also cast doubt over his integrity as a businessman.<sup>25</sup>

A week later the *Standard* went into greater detail about Varty's father, 'his unpopularity was caused by his rough manners to the poorer people, especially those upon whom he might have to call for rates more than once'.<sup>26</sup> It also revealed that it had gone as far as inviting Varty to withdraw his candidature. In the week of polling day the paper's obsession with this character assassination reached its culmination with 11 out of 19 columns devoted to personal attack, concluding with the comment 'We have no personal malice whatever against Mr. Varty'.<sup>27</sup> By the norms and practices of the Victorian local press this concentrated vilification was highly unusual and perhaps a measure of the growing unease among local Conservatives that Varty's popularity with the local working class was now a real threat to James Round. How effective it was in turning voters away from Varty it is impossible to assess. Literate workers with Liberal sympathies would probably not have made the *Standard* their chosen newspaper. Others without either reading skills or the time required to peruse the paper would, nevertheless, have learned of the 'biography' in their union meetings, their chapel gatherings or in the tap room of the local, and the *Standard* ran the risk of causing a backlash that would inadvertently reinforce Liberal support. Evidence for this emerged at a Gt Bentley meeting when Mr Talbot, Conservative MP for Oxford University, lectured the audience on the sale of Essex land to 'cockneys'. His disapproval clearly was an obvious reference to Varty and led to an interruption from an agricultural labourer who said, 'I don't think it's fair to go in for Mr. Varty like this because he never says anything unkind of Mr. Round'.<sup>28</sup> A few days later

Round encountered considerable anger at St Osyth National School Room before a very large gathering. His opening comments on Ireland were listened to respectfully but when he moved on to agriculture and the issues of wage rates and the Small Holdings Bill, he was subject to loud interruptions and derisive laughter. When he asked what subjects they wanted him to cover, one man called out 'Game Laws is one and how about rabbits'; another, 'I votes for the man what works for his grub' accompanied by loud laughter. Finally, the chairman was challenged when he called for a resolution of support for Round and the National Anthem was interspersed with hoots and yells.<sup>29</sup> Further disturbances followed at Conservative gatherings in Dedham and Layer Breton. It is quite possible that anger over the *Essex Standard* articles played a part in this, but it is also worth noting that highly charged and emotional meetings close to polling day were not uncommon. During the 1885 campaign in Essex there had been stone and mud throwing, fighting and the letting off of fireworks, and in Long Melford the reading of the Riot Act, all of which put the events at St Osyth into perspective.

When the result was announced at Colchester Town Hall it was revealed that a turnout of 72.5% had returned Round yet again, his 4,112 votes bettering Varty's 3,807, his majority of 305 almost 2,000 down on what he had achieved in 1886. To a certain extent Round was subject to a national move towards the Liberals that enabled Gladstone to once again form a government but the 'swing' to the Liberals in his own constituency was far larger (14.7%) than in other divisions in the county. In his acceptance speech Round acknowledged 'there had been a movement amongst the agricultural labourers adverse to the Conservative cause, but he ventured to say that the



Conservatives were no less their friends than any other party.’ For his part Varty paid tribute to the ‘working men of Clacton, of Brightlingsea, of Manningtree and the villages throughout the division that had fought the battle’, men who, he added ‘must not show their colours’.<sup>30</sup> For such men, agricultural labourers and fishermen, Robert Varty had provided a brief interlude where they had found a voice. The *Essex Weekly News* which had played no part in the personal attacks on Varty and neither made any reference to the tactics of its rival, provided a balanced summary of events:

Everybody regarded the seat as one of the safest in the county – in fact Mr. Varty’s candidature was for some time looked upon almost as a joke. The Conservatives made so cock-sure of the seat that they neglected many of the ordinary means of winning it, and their organisation was far from perfect. Mr. Varty, on the other hand, toiled late and early among the labourers inland and the fishermen along the coast. Almost single handed he carried on for weeks an uphill fight and came at last within measurable distance of ousting an old and highly popular member.<sup>31</sup>

One of the issues that Varty had advocated was addressed by Gladstone’s new government with some expedition. Despite fierce resistance, particularly from the House of Lords, a Local Government Act in 1894 introduced the first parish councils. At the first set of elections in December 1894 the Harwich parliamentary division produced 33 farm worker councillors spread across 22 villages,<sup>32</sup> by far the most impressive figures across the county. Some of these may well have been radicals politicised by Varty and the agricultural trade unions and there was a noticeable correlation between labourer

councillors and villages that had had union branches. As the Essex press made much of the attempts to depoliticise these first parish council elections, it would be impossible to make a definitive statement, particularly given the fact that both NALU and the ECLF had ceased operations by 1894. In the following year, another General Election saw Varty once again opposed to Round, but the political tide was now moving in favour of the Conservatives. Round won easily by 4,566 votes to Varty’s 2,685 (a majority of 1,881). The all too brief economic relaxation of the depression at the start of the 1890s, which had revitalised trade unionism and ushered in Gladstone’s election victory of 1892, was by now at an end and the depression reasserted itself in the Essex countryside. Conservative governments were to remain in power for another 11 years and the short flowering of rural radicalism in late Victorian Essex faded into history.

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acres and a cow’ policy in his 1885 ‘Unauthorised Programme’ endorsed by the MP for Ipswich, Jesse Collings.

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32. The distribution was as follows with numbers of labourers, if more than one, given in brackets. The remaining parishes elected just one labourer each: Layer-de-la-Haye (4) Lt Bromley (3) Beaumont-cum-Moze (2) Copford (2) Fingringhoe (2) Gt Horkesley (2) Kirby le Soken (2) Thorpe le Soken (2) Boxted, Brightlingsea, Fordham, Gt Bentley, Gt Bromley, Gt Holland, Langham, Lt Oakley, Ramsey, St Osyth, Tendring, Thorrington, West Bergholt and West Mersea. From unpublished research by the author.

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### The Author

Ted Woodgate taught History in Essex Secondary Schools for 38 years. In 1993 he was awarded an MPhil at Essex University for a thesis that examined the impact of the Essex branches of the National Agricultural Labourers Union in parliamentary and local elections in the late Victorian era. Arthur Brown, his supervisor, encouraged him to work for Essex WEA and since his retirement in 2010 Ted has been an active history tutor in the county.

# Terraced Housing in the Landscape

by

Ken Newman

In May 2016, BBC 4 produced three programmes entitled *At Home with the British*,<sup>1</sup> in the second of which Dan Cruickshank ‘explored the British love affair with the terrace (housing)’. The concept of the terrace dwelling is well known to all adults in Britain, if not by the original introduction to *Coronation Street* (ITV 3), or the lure of the estate agent’s phrase ‘attractive end of terrace property’, certainly by their presence round the medieval core and shopping centre in nearly every British town and city.

Although Cruickshank briefly mentioned early and Georgian terraces, he concentrated on the Victorian terraces of the industrial north of England, especially in Liverpool and its environs. Here they are widespread, and some northern towns, particularly along the Mersey are dominated by them. These are the type of houses we are familiar with and there can be no doubt they have great importance in terms of the industrial and social history of these areas. However, much of the terraced housing in northern towns was the result of rapid industrial development in the 1780s well before Victoria’s reign. Between 1730 and 1840 most townscapes of northern England, and to some extent those of central Scotland, changed dramatically as population grew and industry became town-centred.

This article will expand some of Cruickshank’s comments on the terraces of the northern industrial areas, then examine a similar situation in London before looking at terraces in ‘rural areas’ especially in Essex.

## The Industrial North

There is evidence of the house style we call a ‘terrace’ in early Egyptian time, through the Roman period and onwards being recorded in Paris in 1615.

They were introduced to England in the 1630s and became quite common in the 1720s thus clearly predating their association with the Victorian urban scene, and it was at the end of the eighteenth century that Edmund Cartwright’s application of James Watt’s rotary steam engine to the manufacture of cotton textiles caused many more terraces to be built. The factories, which had previously relied on waterpower from the fast-flowing Pennine streams, began moving to the coalfields. The work force had to live near their place of work whether it be the textile mill or the coal mine, largely because ‘the employment was so often of a casual nature’<sup>2</sup> Another reason for this housing agglomeration was the terrace style of housing designed for the workers and the financing of it: ‘The factory became the nucleus of the new urban organism. Every other detail of life was subordinate to it.’<sup>3</sup>

Cotton and Manchester led the early phase of the Industrial Revolution: ‘No one doubted that the cotton industry explained the increasing size and wealth of the town.’<sup>4</sup> Cotton made Manchester and ‘it became one of the commercial capitals of Europe – the din of machinery was the music of economic progress.’<sup>5</sup> This progress was reflected both in the newness of the buildings (factory and dwellings) and in the growing squalor of the worker’s housing. The latter was ‘thought to be a necessary product of increasing wealth.’<sup>6</sup>

However, these changes did not happen all at once. Housing and conditions varied considerably as did the overall plan of the town itself. Many of the speculators’ terraces, even the original blind-back and the later back-to-back dwellings<sup>7</sup> which spread rapidly after the 1780’s were a vast improvement on the housing that many workers had come from<sup>8</sup>

being brick built, slate roofed, warm and with differentiated rooms – some were three storeys with a cellar – but water supply and sanitary arrangements were often rudimentary and in very short supply. This was to cause great problems in early and mid-Victorian times.

Then in the late 1830’s came the railway, providing employment<sup>9</sup> (although in some places sweeping away housing), helping the distribution and marketing of products and food, and after 1844 (‘Cheap Trains’ Act) the movement of people both into and out of towns. The railways also indulged in building their own speculative terraced housing.<sup>10</sup> ‘If the steam-powered factory, producing for the world market, was the first factor that tended to increase the area of urban congestion, the new railroad transportation system, after 1830 greatly abetted it.’<sup>11</sup> Thus the townscape of most northern industrial towns emerged, ‘the elements in the new urban complex were the factory, the railroad and the slum. By themselves they constitute the industrial town.’<sup>12</sup>

Largely as a result of Reports from medical officers of the Poor Law Board,<sup>13</sup> by the 1840s the appalling conditions in the factories, the housing, health and education of their workers gradually became known, and equally gradually reforms were brought about during the Victorian period. The Victorians were not without compassion and are usually thought of as great reformers. During Victoria’s reign about 80 Commissions were appointed, Reports presented and Acts passed, but as with the problems, the clamour for reform had started well before her reign. The Victorians were faced with a vast complex situation never faced by a country before. Terraces, building speculators and ‘jerry building’ were really the only



answers to the difficulties, 'indispensable agents in the nationwide operation of housing the working classes.'<sup>14</sup> With no central or local authority to control the influx of workers to the industrial towns or the conditions they had to endure<sup>15</sup> the problems were going to take some time to alleviate. Even the most enlightened towns were hampered by the necessity of getting an Act for each reform proposed and Treasury permission for any loan raised.<sup>16</sup> In most northern industrial towns of this period it was not so much an English love affair with terraces – they were a necessity.

### London's 'Victorian' Terraces

So obvious were the deplorable conditions of the terraces and back-to-backs of many (not all) northern towns that the Victorian terraces (often contiguous tenements)<sup>17</sup> and the slums of London are commonly by-passed or overlooked. As Briggs observed, 'in early Victorian times interest in the provincial cities had been associated with the onward march of industrialisation' and its social consequences. But in late Victorian times the attention of the 'thinkers and writers, social critics and prophets' was drawn to the growth of London, both in its population and in the area being built over. London grew from 1,873,676 inhabitants in 1841 to 4,232,118 in 1891, a faster growth than any provincial city with the possible exception of Glasgow. In 1686 Robert Southwold questioned 'is there not a Tumour in that place (London)?', and later in 1830 William Cobbett was calling the city 'The Great Wen'. In 1881 Henry James wrote of London's 'horrible numerosity' and Arthur Sherwell in 1901 likened London's remorseless growth to an advancing sea, overspreading the coast and flooding the inland plains.<sup>18</sup>

By the 1880's, over 30% of London's population lived in poverty, most of them were concentrated east of Aldgate Pump,

'this piece of land is supposed to contain the most destitute population in England'<sup>19</sup> Many of the upper class quarters also had 'intolerable slums'<sup>20</sup> largely hidden by the facades, whereas in the east they were evident everywhere and oppressive.<sup>21</sup> Gradually two worlds had developed in London 'one dark and mysterious (east London), the other dazzling and ostentatious (west London).'<sup>22</sup>

The 'East End' became a concept for Victorian writers on society, 'the focus of the problem of poverty in the midst of wealth.' What puzzled them was that the growth of London and its slums seemed to obey no laws or at least not those gained from the observations of Engels, Disraeli, de Toqueville and Carlyle concerning poverty in northern cities during the 1840s.<sup>23</sup> How had this come about? Industrialisation alone provided no fully satisfactory explanation. Any answer to this question has to be set against London's very different historical background to that of Manchester.

London seems to have gathered the identity of the capital of Britain in Roman times<sup>24</sup> and during the following centuries built up the full trappings and accoutrements of a capital city and leading port, which by its very nature included people living in poor conditions. By late Victorian times London was not only the capital of a unified parliamentary monarchy<sup>25</sup> and its leading port, it was the capital of a great Empire, the leading entrepôt and warehouse for Europe, and the world's largest and richest city. Such a city creates a vast number of opportunities for employment in public and personal services of every conceivable kind<sup>26</sup> most of which were poorly paid but often had the potential for advancement and relative wealth. London acted like a magnet, drawing in the unemployed from rural south-east England, migrants from poverty-stricken Ireland, refugees escaping religious persecution and political exiles – mainly Russian, Polish, Danish and German Jews who

moved into Whitechapel and Mile End. From earliest times London had attracted adventurers and fortune seekers influenced by stories of 'streets paved with gold'<sup>27</sup> plus those with real skills (the Huguenots especially after 1685, such as the Courtaulds and Bosanquets). This movement into London was aided by the expansion of the London Docks (1802-65) which was responsible for 'the mean terraces of Bermondsey, Poplar, Millwall, Canning Town, East Ham and Woolwich'<sup>28</sup> and the centering of the railway network on London 1852-77.<sup>29</sup>

Rows of tenements, terraces and three storey cottages built in back yards, even back-to-backs, plus many small two-storeyed cottages sprang up.<sup>30</sup> There was very little uniformity. In 1883 a pamphlet by George Sims described 'pestilent human rookeries where tens of thousands are crowded together amid horrors which call to mind what we have heard of the middle passage of the slave ship'.<sup>31</sup> In 1915 Patrick Geddes remarked that 'slum, semi-slum and super-slum – to this has become the evolution of cities',<sup>32</sup> and despite some clearances, the Blitz, LCC Council Estates, New Towns and Tower Blocks this was still true of London down to the 1960s and early 70s.<sup>33</sup>

### Essex Terraces

In addition to the industrialised towns and cities of northern England and the population magnet of the capital London, terraced dwellings are found in more rural settings (especially in the small market towns), with 'semi-industrial' occupations such as quarrying, spinning and weaving, local foundries and engineering, and food processing. The owners of large country estates often housed employees in terraces and good examples of them can also be found in nearly every tiny settlement concerned with fishing. They occur in association with certain institutions such as almshouses (occasionally

hospitals), military barracks and lighthouse keeper's cottages. Somewhat grander terraces are common in spas,<sup>34</sup> fashionable resorts and small sea-side towns like Dovercourt and Walton-on-the-Naze (Fig 1). Even the expanding inland town of royal Poundbury (Dorset) has its 'Regency Terrace'. Although interwar local government housing utilised terraces, during the 1930s they fell out of fashion, but picked up again in the 1950s when council estates replaced 'ribbon' development along roads. Today they are favoured by councils and speculators as a result of demand, housing targets and costs.

Many Essex market towns contain at least one main street of early terraces. This is well shown in Coggeshall and Manningtree. These houses have played many roles in different capacities – often only revealed by interior features, especially roof structures, or by examination of the back of the row. Away from the town centre Great Dunmow has a nice row of eight nineteenth century dwellings on the west side of Chelmsford Road just after Hasler's Lane. Although contiguous in brickwork a roof break discloses two fours, the second of which has more decoration. At the beginning of The Causeway on the road to Thaxted is a more lively terrace of 12 houses dated '1894 CW' (Countess of Warwick, Easton Lodge). These have angled bay windows, lighter brick facing and well diapered walls. Braintree also has some fine approach road terraces – a block of six timber-framed eighteenth century cottages occur on London Road just before the Pierrefitte Way junction. Opposite St Michael's Hospital on Rayne Road appears to be a pleasing line of Edwardian Villas but less obviously among them are similar style terraces of seven, four and five dwellings. Bradford Street (actually in Bocking) presents an 'almost uninterrupted sequence of good quality houses, dating back to the early C13',<sup>35</sup>



**1. South Terrace, Walton-on-the-Naze, as seen from the foot of the pier, built in 1861 by Peter Bruff. (A. Corder-Birch collection)**

and here within the great cluster of Medieval to Georgian pastel coloured timber-framed and half-timbered houses, on the east side are the unassuming May Cottages, a grey terrace of four dated 1895, the Braintree end of which was once converted into a shop. Along the Coggeshall Road, east of Courtauld Road (and still in Bocking), is the Courtauld built 1929 brick 'Arts & Crafts' style terrace of six,<sup>36</sup> totally out of keeping with the rest of Coggeshall Road architecture.

Essex is a leading producer (25%) of aggregates in the UK. The source material is a wide-spread semi-consolidated surface deposit across central and south Essex, and gaining and processing it is not usually labour intensive. Aggregate extraction is ephemeral, ever-moving and rarely does it encourage or warrant terraced settlement. In reality only the Chalk in north Essex (Newport to Little Chesterford) and that in the south (Purfleet to Grays) has been quarried to any extent. The terraced Hollow Cottages at Purfleet were built in 1790 by the pit owner. Originally of 12 dwellings, these are now six and Grade II Listed.<sup>37</sup> In north Essex at Manuden is a partially broken row of chalk 'clunch' and Clay Lump houses. In fact numerous single 'clunch and lump' cottages occur throughout this area.

Essex has a fine selection of terraces connected to manufacturing industries viz, brickmaking at

Epping, (Wintry Wood on the B1393) and Hatfield Peverel (recently demolished for A12 access road widening); spinning and weaving at Saffron Walden (East Street flint and brick, the fronts are two-storeyed, the backs have three on the steep bank down to the stream and at Halstead (Finsbury Place early/mid nineteenth century off Head Street, Weavers Row – 12 dwellings of similar age, Factory Lane East 1872 and The Causeway 1883 (Fig 2), both Courtaulds). Factory Lane East has two blocks of three-storeyed terraced housing (16 dwellings in all) – an outstanding example of industrial housing. The long terrace of 11 dwellings, each of three storeys facing south in Rayne Road, Braintree, at the northern end of Pierrefitte Way, are also thought to be weaver's cottages. Neat flint and brick cottages in two numbered blocks of five in Gt Maplestead have been linked by local folk history to the straw plaiting industry (hats) started by the Marquess of Buckingham of Gosfield Hall to help the poor in the late eighteenth century;<sup>38</sup> iron foundries and engineering companies provide some excellent terraces at Heybridge (Bentalls 1815–1912),<sup>39</sup> Earls Colne (Hunt 1872 and 1876), Walton-on-the-Naze (Warners 1871–72 famous for engine blocks and piano frames), South Fambridge (Carey & Birch 1870) and Rochford (Hollick





**2. The Causeway, Halstead, built 1883 by George Courtauld. The architect was George Sherrin. (A. Corder-Birch collection)**

1898).<sup>40</sup> Silver End, Francis Crittall's model village was built between 1926-32 to house workers for his new window manufacturing works close by. The village is world famous for its 'International Modernist' fake concrete two-storied, rectangular, flat-roofed 'box' houses. However, these dwellings make up less than 30% of the buildings as Crittall and his seven architects did not eschew terraces. These are generally built of brick, in blocks of four in Silver Street and eight in Valentine Way. The whole concept is in fact a mid-twentieth century version of the more enlightened employers' company towns in the industrial north-west.<sup>41</sup> The brewing and fruit preserving industries have produced some fine terraces for employees at Saffron Walden (Gibson, brewer and banker 1841) an interesting complex of two parallel terraces, the first with gault brick fronts and red brick backs of six dwellings accessed by three doors, and the second terrace a red brick simple row of four, Mistley (Free, Rodwell & Co, maltsters) several terraces of four built to the east of the large malthouses of 1896-1904 which dominate the main road, and Tiptree (Wilkin & Sons Ltd, jam makers) ten early twentieth century terrace dwellings at Damson Gardens.<sup>42</sup>

In keeping with the industrial areas of the north and the country's capital, Essex also has its

terraced railway company-built village at Parkeston.<sup>43</sup> Opened by the Great Eastern Railway in 1883 when the quay became operational, it was to comprise 11 terraced streets named after directors of the Company and the paddle steamers serving the port. The first three streets were for construction workers, the other eight completed in 1888 were for employees and strictly controlled by the Company. Una Street has two blocks of ten dwellings on each side of the road. Regarding quays, Purfleet has some lengthy terraces built by a steamship company (1905) and a timber importing business (1904) for their employees.

Essex with its access to the Channel and North Sea has a long history of maritime activity. Its estuaries and sheltered inlets provide fishing ports and settlements from Harwich to Barking, but few if any seem to have developed the traditional single-storey fishermen's terraces, or they have been so successfully rebuilt and converted they are no longer obvious. This may reflect the quite early decline of Essex off-shore and distant-water fishing during the early nineteenth century as happened at Barking. However, a short row of eighteenth century weather-boarded and thatched fishermen's cottages (although not a terrace) could be seen until recently at the lower end of Hall Road, Walton-on-the-Naze. Undoubtedly more

must have existed in the dozen or so fish-landing harbours round the Essex coast.

Audley End Village is an excellent example of an estate village with a remarkable series of contiguous stepped terraces on the western side of the sloping village street.<sup>44</sup> Here a block of six dwellings is followed by four and then three, all eighteenth century timber framed and plastered.

Opposite is a similar row of four houses. Another good example of an estate terrace is that along Back Lane, Castle Hedingham, although two or three have coalesced they are still numbered 1-12. The small 'village' next to Braxted church was demolished by Peter Du Cane III soon after he enlarged Braxted Park in 1825. He then rebuilt it as two brick terraces at Bung Row helping to 'flesh-out' the tiny hamlet of Gt Braxted.<sup>45</sup> The owners of The Grove off Newland Street, Witham, built an adjoining terrace in 1828 for their servants. Short isolated terraces (three or four dwellings) for estate workers, often occur along country roads in nearly all parts of Britain.

Two fine examples of stand-alone terraces can be seen in the Post Office Cottages<sup>46</sup> built in 1860 at Birch on the Maldon Road, and the 'quiet' row of five dwellings bordering the Shalford to Wethersfield road on the boundary of the Manor House park. One of the most incongruous stand-alone terraces in terms of material and style is that of Castle View at Castle Hedingham.

They were built along the road in the early twentieth century isolated between the almshouses (demolished just post-war) at Pye Corner and the beginning of the extremely varied housing of Nunnery Street. Castle View is of red brick, tall and bay-windowed. It stood out until the coming of two council house terraces linked it to Nunnery Street (1950s), then the De Vere School and Bowmans Park Estate connected it to Pye Corner in the 1970s. Despite more recent inappropriate developments in the area,



**3. Saffron Walden Almshouses, built in a 'thin Tudor Gothic style' (Bettley & Pevsner, p.662). (A. Corder-Birch collection)**

Castle View is still visually very isolated.

Essex has many examples of terraced almshouses. In founding-date order, the earliest and perhaps the largest and certainly the most handsome are those at Saffron Walden. The King Edward VI Almshouses<sup>47</sup> founded in 1400, re-founded in 1549, re-built in 1782 and 1882-83 and paid for by the Gibson family, are of two storeys built on three sides of a lawned courtyard facing the road (Fig 3). The Mildmay Almshouses<sup>48</sup> in Upper Moulsham Street, Chelmsford founded in 1565, re-built 1758, house six dwellings in a well-built brick building. Colchester with its three different sets of terraced almshouses all in close proximity (Winnock's 1678, Winsley's 1727 and Kendall's two parallel rows 1791 and 1802) may be thought of as the 'almshouse capital' of Essex.<sup>49</sup> Winsley's Almshouses are very interesting, originating in a late 1500s farmhouse, the upper storey now the chapel, has an archway below. Wings which have grown steadily longer by additions from 1808-1954, protrude from both sides of the original building to form a long narrow courtyard open to the main Colchester-Old Heath Road. Both Kendall's and Winsley's have been expanded, the former by contiguous single storey terraces, the latter almost surrounded by single or semi-detached almshouses of the early

and late 1930s. At Thaxted<sup>50</sup> is a neat row of long narrow almshouses west of the church 'facing' away from the access lane. At present they number three, although the five chimneys and the number of dormers tend to indicate more, all built in the early 1700s (Fig 4). In addition to providing worker's cottages at Earls Colne, Hunt (Atlas Iron Works) also built almshouses – a terrace of five in 1909 along Burrows Road.<sup>51</sup> Of the one storey almshouses in Essex, John Doreward's, Bocking (1438)<sup>52</sup> of four dwellings re-built in 1869, has a rarely seen charming back courtyard. The four at Stock<sup>53</sup> founded by Richard Twedye in 1574 are opposite the church. The Lovibond Almshouses at Hatfield Peverel<sup>54</sup> founded in 1820 are a terrace of four, white brick, with distinctive well porched and benched front doors. Ingatestone has three ranges of terraces in diapered brickwork round a lawned court with a 'bell turreted' chapel in the central range, all built by Lord Petre in 1840.<sup>55</sup> The well kept seven single storey almshouses at Felsted have a similar plan and a bell turret.<sup>56</sup> Originally built by Lord Rich in 1565 they were rebuilt by Chancellor in 1878 after a fire, and repaired after another in 1997. Dedham has three quite different but charming groups of almshouses. Stephen Dunton's Almshouses 1806, but founded earlier, are a continuous

terrace of nine dwellings.<sup>57</sup> The end houses are definitely single-storey, the central block of five are hip-roofed and may be two-storeyed with dormers at the rear. Mary Barfield's Almshouses 1834 (restored 1893)<sup>58</sup> have a garden in front with a low wall showing empty iron railing sockets – suggesting 1939-45 War patriotism. The four dwellings are of brick with most attractive bargeboards on gables and porches. Samuel Barker's Almshouses,<sup>59</sup> also four in number, built in 1863 are two-storeyed of brick with lighter facings, dormers and a veranda. The St Mark's College Almshouses in Audley End Village have a long and interesting history.<sup>60</sup> They are of brick and mainly single storey built round two linked squares of ten dwellings each. Built by the Earl of Suffolk in the early 1600s, probably on the site of Walden Abbey's hospital of 1258, they were restored between 1947 and 1954 but still retain a very authentic aura both outside and inside.

Hospitals very occasionally have terraced sections, that of the East End Maternity Hospital on Commercial Road, Stepney is a good example.<sup>61</sup> Broomfield Hospital has acquired a series of terraced dwellings for the nursing staff. Three groups of 'traditional' nurse's homes, terraces of seven, six and four occur in front of Broomfield Court and further to the north is a large complex of modern flats and several 'luxury style' terraces of two storeys in blocks of four, five and six.

Military barracks vary enormously in age and style, but there can be few better examples of military terraces than that at Tilbury Fort.<sup>62</sup> Here on the east side of a large two acre square is a striking two storey range of stock-brick accommodation for officers built in 1722. Due to re-building, alterations and differing intermittent use over a considerable period of time, it is not entirely certain how many dwellings existed. With reference to doors and windows perhaps



originally just over 20.

Harwich High Lighthouse, built 1817-8, had keepers' accommodation in the six lower rooms but several others have attached terraces of three dwellings.<sup>63</sup> Also at Harwich (Angelgate) are a fascinating group of 16 two-storeyed former coastguard cottages built in terraces of four, nine and three round an open square. Each block of four has two lean-to brick and slate roofed porches with doors on both sides. Each porch has its own gutter and down-pipe.<sup>64</sup>

Little seems to have been written about rural council housing estates. These take up a considerable acreage and are a marked feature of the landscape round nearly every small market town – in some places they are disproportionately large in area in relation to the size of the town. The well planned and well 'landscaped' Coldnailhurst Council Housing Estate (named after the farm on which land the estate was built) in Braintree<sup>65</sup> was underway in the early 1950s and makes extensive use of terraces. The main early access road from Panfield Lane, Coldnailhurst Avenue, has several terraces of four, one of five and two of eight dwellings. The newer western section has several long terraced streets and although less supplied with open spaces, it is still very acceptable. The council housing estate of New Park off the Sudbury Road at Castle Hedingham, is sited at the base of the steep, traditional tobogganing



4. The Almshouses, Thaxted. (A. Corder-Birch collection)

slope. There is one terrace of eight at the entrance to the Close, the rest are mainly of four dwellings (one block is single storey), but at the furthest end of the estate is a splendid example of six dwellings in a stepped terrace directly up the slope.

One privately developed terrace of five dwellings along the old A12 in Hatfield Peverel has the envious privilege of being squeezed in dramatically between The Blue Strawberry and The Swan Public House.<sup>66</sup> Braintree speculators have made good use of terraces and tenements east of Railway Street on land once the site of Crittall, Lake & Elliot and Courtauld factories etc.etc. The blocks of three-storeyed flats at the junction of Railway Street and Trinovantian Way, built in 2002 and 2004, are quite pleasing 'modernised' mock neo-classical in style, although the grey

rounded corner towers are rather austere. In very recent years two nice terraces of three dwellings each, have been built at Writtle (Ongar Road). At Duke's Wood Close, Boreham a neat traditional terrace of four dwellings was built in 2016 on the edge of a modern estate, originally to merge in with existing buildings (since demolished). To the west of the main road through Gt Leighs are three modern estates. The northernmost is Shimbrooks (Fig 5), a remarkable exhibition of attractive terraces in different but well-matched styles. One three-storeyed crescent of five front doors – each serving three flats is quite spectacular. The other two estates, Fayrewood Drive and Brickbarns, make imaginative use of many terraces, the latter in particular, with its curving streets and areas of mock Victorian and Edwardian terraces gives a good



5. Terraces for the twenty-first century: Shimbrooks, Gt Leighs. (N. Wiffen, 09/12/2019) Essex JOURNAL 57

impression of large village or small town architecture. In the process of construction on Main Road/Saxon Way, Broomfield is a terraced range of three, fitting in well with the existing houses. Private developers are currently (2018) constructing a great mixture of houses, including some very attractive gabled and flat-topped terraces of six at New Beaulieu Park in a rural setting on the north-west margins of Chelmsford.

### Conclusion

Developers and builders 'love' them because terraces can be mass-produced, built more efficiently and faster, and are cheaper in cost of materials. They are the most economical and profitable use of building land. Terraces can be re-cycled almost indefinitely and can be reconstructed from rows of disused shops (Kingston upon Hull), industrial buildings such as rope works (Cromarty 1983), breweries and maltings. The maltings of Adams Brewery (now Adams Court) in Halstead has recently been converted into seven incredibly attractive single storey terraced houses. People of all kinds, especially first-time buyers, 'love' them as the average terrace house is still relatively good value for money. The older terraces are eagerly sought after. They tend to be close to town/city centre facilities in established stable areas and are less costly to heat, benefiting from warmth each side. End of terrace houses also offer similar accommodation to a 'semi'. Terraces seem to encourage friendly and supportive communities (useful neighbours) this also gives the feeling of greater security. The community-forging properties of terraces are very important in areas depending on employment in one major occupation. The ability and willingness to help out during illness and exceptional conditions can be vital.

Figures from the National Home Building Council show that since the year 2000 the

numbers of new terraces nearly every year make up 25% of new buildings. Such is the demand for them, prices have been steadily catching-up on other forms of housing. According to the Land Registry data the average price for a UK flat from 2006–2016 increased by 34%, a terraced house by 27.7%, detached houses by 26% and semi-detached houses by 24.2%. The figures for Essex are terraces 48.8%, detached houses 47.2%, semi-detached 46.8% and flats 29.1%. Epping Forest had the biggest increase for terraced properties in the county with 70.7%. There were 47,237 dwellings in Chelmsford in August 2018 of which 24% were terraces, and in a report from English Heritage, it is stated that maintaining a typical Victorian terrace over 30 years is around 60% cheaper than building and maintaining a modern detached house.<sup>67</sup> Today with high population and life-style pressure, terraces are once again needed – although in reality it is doubtful that this type of building has ever been entirely out of use.

### References

1. D. Cruickshank, *At Home With the British*, BBC4, Episode 2, 26/05/2016.
2. J.D. Chambers, *The Workshop of the World* (Oxford, 1964), p.175.
3. L. Mumford, *The City in History* (London, 1966), p.522.
4. A. Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London, 1968), p.89.
5. Ibid, p.89. See also L.D. Stamp & S.H. Beaver, *The British Isles: A Geographic & Economic Survey* (London, 1964), p.499.
6. Briggs, p.89.
7. Houses faced on to narrow streets were backed on to other houses facing another parallel road so having a shared or blind (no windows) back wall. See R.W. Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture: An Illustrated Handbook* (London, 1971), p.187, for a clear diagram of back-to-backs. See M. Aston & J. Bond, *The Landscape of Towns* (London, 1976), pp.168–9 for explanation of their origin and spread & p.171, also figure 38, for differing plans in several cities and towns.

8. P. Gregg, *A Social and Economic History of Britain 1760-1950* (London, 1952), p.193, photograph of a rural dwelling, 'The Hovels of the Poor'.
9. See Chambers, Chapter Two, Section (ii) Railways, 'Shipping, Scientific Technology', pp.52–61. Railways employed 65,000 male workers in 1851 and 174,000 in 1881. 'Railway Mania' reached its height in 1844–5 and from 1846–68 they gave employment directly to 250,000 people.
10. Ibid, p.59. Many of the railway employees lived in the new towns of Crewe and Swindon built for them. See Aston p.197.
11. Mumford, p.520. Chambers (pp.53–56) saw the railways as a stabilising force, providing employment, stimulating industry and production in general and acting as a leveller in a class-ridden society, in fact a great unifier of the nation.
12. Mumford, p.522. The 'Industrial Revolution' affected all of the textile and fibre industries, some more slowly than others, but all innovations initially had a disastrous effect on the workforce involved.
13. Dr T.T. Thackrah of Leeds, 'increase in wealth with the decline in health,' from an investigation report of 1831 (plus 36 other Leeds doctors in 1842): Briggs, p.145.
14. Use of 'Jerry built' was first recorded in 1869. 'jerry-builder,' *OED Online*, (Oxford, 2020), [www.oed.com/view/Entry/101110](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/101110), (27/04/2020). Chambers, p.182. However, good quality terraced worker's dwellings in 'model' villages were provided by some mill owners: Arkwright 1775–99, Owen 1800, Ashworth 1820 & Salt 1849.
15. Briggs, p.115, 'There is no trace of the slow continuous action of government', quoting D.E. Tocqueville, 1835.
16. Gregg, p.201. Many of the reforms could be avoided or had loopholes and despite being banned in 1909 it was not until 1937 the last back-to-back was built in Leeds.
17. Tenements can be described briefly as houses of three or more storeys divided horizontally into one or two-roomed flats. They can be found as a single building, in blocks or as a long terrace.



- Tenements are typical of much housing in London and Glasgow, although they are also common in Liverpool, Newcastle and Bristol. In history they can be traced back to Caesar's Rome (Mumford p.254-5).
18. Briggs, pp.311, 313.
  19. Charles Booth quoted in Briggs, p.314.
  20. Mumford p.529, 'even this revolutionary critic (Friedrich Engels) was apparently unaware of the fact that the upper-class quarters were, more often than not, intolerable super-slums.'
  21. Briggs, p.315.
  22. See Briggs pp.314-317, & P. Ackroyd, *London the Biography* (London, 2001), pp.675-7. These authors echo many observations of several Victorian writers: 'The West End has the money and the East End has the dirt, there is leisure in the west and labour in the east'; 'Alleys versus squares, thickets versus gardens, railway embankments versus mews'.
  23. Briggs pp.66-71, 94-97, 311, 314.
  24. Ackroyd, p.121.
  25. J. Black, *Why the Industrial Revolution Happened Here*, BBC4, 07/01/17.
  26. P.G. Hall, *The Industries of London Since 1861* (London, 1962), p.24. See also R. Hutchinson, *The Butcher, The Baker, The Candlestick Maker : The Story of Britain Through Its Census Since 1801* (London, 2017). 'There were so many different jobs in Victorian times that even the census takers couldn't keep track. They compiled a bulky in-house dictionary of British occupations to help them.'
  27. Ackroyd pp.18-9. 'London Gold has proved more perishable than London Stone.'
  28. P. Whitfield, *London A Life in Maps* (London, 2006), pp.126-9.
  29. Ackroyd p.591, also M.Buerk, *How The Victorians Built Britain*, Channel 5, Part 1, 01/09/15.
  30. Gregg, p.481.
  31. Gregg, p.479. Nevertheless, charitable groups (e.g. Peabody 1864) were building and exhibiting improved terraces for the poor. The Bata Shoe Factory estate in East Tilbury (1933) was mainly of semi-detached houses but there were two blocks of basic flats.
  32. Mumford, pp.494 & p.528.
  33. Thames TV, *London Slums, East Street 1972*, 23/03/17.
  34. Aston 1976, pp.144-52.
  35. J. Bettley & N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Essex* (New Haven & London, 2007), p.150.
  36. Ibid, p.152. The building is more in the style of Philip Webb (1831-1915), the father-figure of the Arts and Crafts movement, than Lutyens (1869-1944).
  37. See T. Crosby, A. Garwood & A. Corder-Birch, 'Industrial Housing in Essex' in *Essex Journal*, 43, 1 (2008), p.18. Whitbread brewers quarried chalk here in the 1790s and built these cottages for workers.
  38. Lady Buckingham played a major part in this enterprise. A similar style, although shorter, brick and flint terrace and a line of isolated flint cottages were built for the poor at Greenstead Green by a local lady benefactor.
  39. Bentalls, noted for the early use of concrete in building: J. Booker, *Essex and the Industrial Revolution* (Chelmsford, 1974), p.216.
  40. Foundry Terrace of 12 cottages built in 1865 for workers at The Maldon Ironworks was demolished in the 1960s (Booker, p.205). James Paxman's Standard Ironworks founded 1872 on Hythe Hill, Colchester may have attracted the development of the typical nineteenth century terraced streets around it.
  41. Bettley, p.686. These 'Modernistic Style' houses at Silver End originated with 65 concrete houses built in Clockhouse Way, Braintree 1918-20. Architecturally the modernistic style terraces at Silver End of 4 and 8 houses seem rather clumsy and are rarely pictured.
  42. Crosby et al, pp.14-21.
  43. Bettley, p.635. In fact the first terraces built here were a speculative venture not the GER. Also T. Crosby, A. Garwood & A. Corder-Birch, *Industrial Housing in Essex* (Chelmsford, 2006) for details of all these developments.
  44. Bettley, pp.105-6.
  45. Ibid, p.394.
  46. Ibid, p.138.
  47. Ibid, p.662.
  48. Ibid, p.222.
  49. Ibid, pp.298-9.
  50. Ibid, p.767.
  51. Ibid, p.333.
  52. Ibid, p.149.
  53. Ibid, p.753.
  54. Ibid, p.482.
  55. Ibid, p.503.
  56. Ibid, p.357.
  57. Ibid, p.323.
  58. Ibid, p.323.
  59. Ibid, p.325.
  60. Ibid, p.106. Pevsner (1954) deems them, 'the best in Essex'. They were intended for retired clergymen but have been a Chelmsford Diocese Residential Youth Centre for the last 20 years.
  61. V. & F. Chambers & R. Higgins, *Hospitals of London* (Stroud, 2014), p.70.
  62. Bettley, p.784. It is worth noting here that the importance of the Cold War work at Waltham Abbey Royal Gunpowder Mills resulted in MOD housing for their employees which included terraced dwellings.
  63. B. Bathurst, *The Lighthouse Stephensons* (London, 1993), p.240.
  64. Bettley, p.476. Walton-on-the-Naze also has a terrace of former coastguard dwellings.
  65. This rolling site (some of it man-made) has been cleverly used to provide green spaces and park-like aspects.
  66. Swan Cottages.
  67. S. Frost, *Essex Chronicle*, 'Property', 18/08/18, p.19. Semi-detached properties account for 33% of Chelmsford's properties, 24% are terraces, 21.9% are flats, 20.9% detached properties and the remainder are mainly mobile homes.

### Acknowledgements

I am pleased to dedicate this article to Stan Newens who I have known for many years through the Essex Society for Archaeology & History. I would like to thank Adrian Corder-Birch for reading through and commenting on an early draft of this article as well as providing illustrations of various examples of Essex terraces from his extensive collection of photographs and postcards. My thanks to Neil Wiffen for taking the picture of Shimbrooks and to my wife Ann who has typed up my notes.

### The Author

Ken Newman is now retired. He studied at Nottingham, Cambridge and London Universities and was Deputy Head (1970-92) at KEGS, Chelmsford, where he taught geology. He was a part-time tutor for Essex University and WEA for nearly 30 years.

# Book Reviews

Victor Gray,  
**A New World in Essex: The Rise & Fall of the Purleigh Brotherhood Colony, 1896–1903**

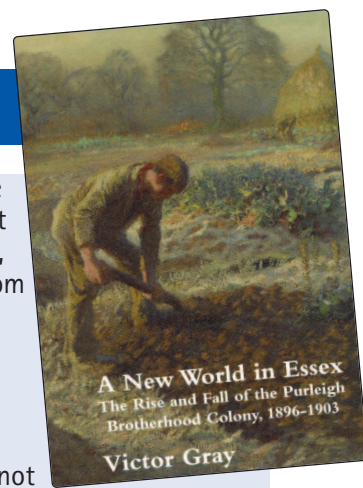
pp.186, ISBN 978-1-86984-824-8.  
Campanula Books, 2019, £9-99.

**T**his splendid book, well researched and written with great clarity, looks at the short-lived Christian socialist Tolstoyan community at Purleigh. In spite of the affluence resulting from Britain's economic dominance by the end of the nineteenth century, there were growing concerns about the downtrodden and exploited underclasses, addressed by influential writers such as John Ruskin and William Morris. A return to cooperative craft activities was seen as one of the remedies for society's ills, ideas that were crystallised by Leo Tolstoy's writings. J.C. Kenworthy was an enthusiastic convert, and set up the Croydon Brotherhood Church in 1894 as a social, religious and educational meeting place, as well as offering a range of services by its members. His belief in the physical dignity of working the land and in the production of food led, in 1896, to the purchase of ten acres of seriously neglected and poor-quality land at Purleigh, Essex. The first winter must have severely tested the resolve of the small team who rented nearby accommodation. Three acres of this reluctant soil were double dug by hand and remarkably by the spring of 1897 they were able to send a crop for sale to the mother church in Croydon. The community grew slowly, bricks were made, and cottages and a greenhouse built, assisted by funds provided by the better-off communards. All were expected to provide their share of labour in return for food and accommodation, and rules and imposed authority were replaced by morally responsible cooperation. All went well initially and, after 18 months, another 13 acres of land was acquired. Even the local community accepted this unprecedented invasion, but inevitably frictions and disagreements soon manifested themselves.

Vic Gray clearly sets out the background to the development of similar idealistic movements, and manages to tease out – from a diverse range of incomplete accounts – the history of this particular community and the probable reasons for its rapid demise. Kenworthy, like any zealous prophet, was probably not an easy man to work with. There were financial difficulties arising from an over-generous donation to resettle a persecuted pacifist minority in the Caucasus, and a serious disagreement about the ejection of two recently joined members. The latter was controversial, not being based on the accustomed universal consent of the group. There were probably other, very human, reasons too, including what was obliquely known as the 'SQ' – the sex question, an activity of which Tolstoy was particularly condemnatory. During the autumn of 1898, an influential group of pioneer members walked out to set up a new community at Whiteway, Gloucestershire. A dwindling band of remainers struggled on at Purleigh for another year but, by the end of 1898, the experiment was over. Over the course of 1899 the Croydon Brotherhood Church, which had set so much store in the Purleigh project, also fell apart. Curiously Purleigh had a second but brief reincarnation when it was taken over by a brotherhood church group from Blackburn. Determinedly anti-establishment, they refused small pox vaccination in the 1901–2 epidemic and, after taking in a sickening tramp, seven members succumbed, one of whom died. The survivors struggled on till June 1903 and then returned to the North.

As one would expect from the author, this book is fully referenced and indexed, and its final chapter follows the subsequent lives of the principal pioneers. It is interesting that the Whiteway community still exists, albeit in a form which the Purleigh pioneers would hardly recognise.

Michael Leach



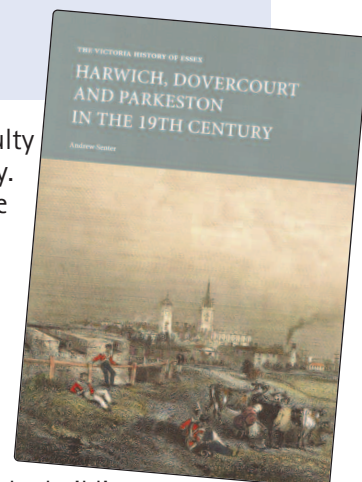
Andrew Senter,  
**The Victoria History of Essex: Harwich, Dovercourt and Parkeston in the 19th Century,**

pp.[ix] 131, ISBN 978-1-91270-211-4.  
University of London, 2019, £14.00.

**T**his latest softback from the Essex VCH stable provides, as its title makes clear, a very welcome coverage of Harwich, Dovercourt and Parkeston in the nineteenth Century, written by Dr Andrew Senter, an authority on his subject.

Nineteenth Century Harwich was above all a port and naval base with, for most of the period, quite a small urban hinterland. This was due to its narrow

promontory site but also difficulty in securing a good water supply. It also suffered decline with the loss of the continental packet service in 1832, though the arrival of the railway in 1854 not only revived its own seaside trade but led to the development of Dovercourt as a distinct seaside and residential resort. Finally, in 1883 the rail link was vital for the building, on marshland, at some expense, of Parkeston, a major passenger and trading port for the Continent. The area was never so buoyant as when it entered the twentieth century.





# Book Reviews

Within this historical framework the book covers the economic activity of the district in agriculture, fishing, ship building, cement manufacture and military defence; its social life and its growing role as a visitor attraction. Charities, relief of the poor, local government and public health, education and religious life, are each given careful coverage revealing, as ever, aspects that reflect national trends and developments, as well as those unique features peculiar to an area, such as the Trinity House lighthouses and lightships, the customs facilities, the brick reservoirs almost every household built to collect rainwater, the main source of Harwich water for much of the century, and the utilitarian gothic of St Nicholas Church, part of a national and royal drive to redress any decline in godliness nationwide.

This is a very concise volume, more a Baedeker than a page turner. Within limited space, its careful adherence to the VCH format does not permit the

broad sweep of a narrative of events, or more than a glance at the interplay of leading personalities; however, as the VCH always does, the book provides that wealth of detail on which narrative authors might safely and soundly hang their stories. And what detail. Dr Senter has consulted such a wide, wide range of sources, that one feels nothing has eluded him. A book of 107 pages of text carries 923 fulsome and admirable footnotes, 41 maps, photos or illustrations, carefully chosen, and over five detailed pages of sources consulted, the product of which is an outstanding success.

No one with the slightest interest in Harwich and Dovercourt and the unique history of this north eastern outpost of Essex should neglect to buy this book.

Andrew Phillips

Kelly Devries & Niccolo Capponi,  
**Castagnaro 1387: Hawkwood's Great Victory**,  
pp.96, ISBN 978-1-47283-351-8.  
Osprey, 2019, £14.99.

**T**his interesting addition to the **Osprey Campaign** series features the battle of Castagnaro fought in northern Italy on 11th March 1387 between the forces of Padua and Verona. In command of the victorious Paduan army was Sir John Hawkwood, the mercenary soldier from Sible Hedingham in Essex. Hawkwood had left home in 1340 when aged about 20; as the younger son of a minor manorial lord he had few prospects locally, so he made his way to France and the Hundred Years War. Here he distinguished himself, promotion followed, and by the time a temporary peace was signed by the main protagonists in 1360, he had been knighted and was the equivalent of a company commander. However, peace meant unemployment so he made his way to Italy where there was constant war between the city states and he spent the rest of his long life as a *condottiere* or mercenary.

**Castagnaro 1387** is a beautifully written book by two academics who specialise in the history of medieval warfare. Replete with excellent illustrations it has high quality modern photographs which show exactly where the battle took place. Maps with accurate overlays show the actual course of the battle.

Unlike a number of authors who merely repeated the received wisdom of their predecessors, Dr Kelly Devries and Dr Niccolo Capponi have re-examined original source material and produced an accurate account of events. In the process they have untangled the complex knot of events which led to the battle of Castagnaro. In reality, the conflict between Padua and Verona was a war between their overlords Milan

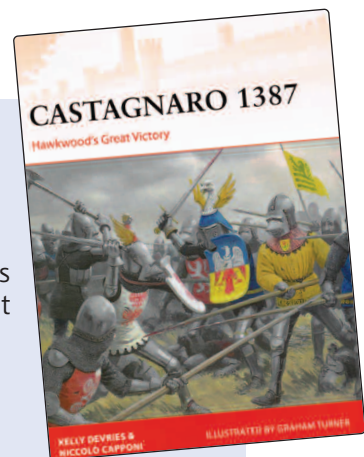
and Venice, a war fought by proxy by the two cities. In 1378, some years before the battle of Castagnaro, a Paduan army led by Hawkwood, suffered a devastating defeat by the forces of Verona. Revenge for this defeat may have been a motive for Hawkwood, on licence from his employer the city of Florence, to lead an army against Verona in 1387.

The events which led to the battle of Castagnaro are described in detail by the authors. In 1385, Bernabo Visconti, tyrant of Milan, and incidentally Hawkwood's father-in-law, was deposed by his nephew Giangaleazzo Visconti, otherwise the Count of Virtue. Giangaleazzo encouraged Hawkwood to enter the service of his client Francesco Carrara, Marquis of Padua, who was then at war with Antonio della Scala of Verona.

Hawkwood, still a vigorous warrior at the age of about 67, led the army of Padua into Veronese territory at Castagnaro, close to the river Adige, accompanied by his personal retinue of archers and men-at-arms. Hawkwood's successful tactics are fully described, as is the crushing defeat and subsequent destruction of the Veronese army. The authors have gone to great lengths to illustrate the arms and armour which would have been used at Castagnaro. Unlike most previous writers on the subject, Devries and Capponi do not attribute Hawkwood's outstanding generalship to what he learned at Crecy and Poitiers, but describe him as 'a highly talented and intelligent general in his own right'.

Christopher Starr

Author of **Medieval Mercenary: Sir John Hawkwood of Essex** (Chelmsford, 2007).



# Book Reviews

George Courtauld,  
**The Rambles of a Fat Bulldog**,  
pp.355, ISBN 978-0-95673-974-2.  
Essex Women's Advisory Group, 2019,  
£12.00.

**R**eaders of the *Essex Journal*, even if they do not know George Courtauld personally, will immediately recognise that he is a member of the Essex family who came to England as Huguenot refugees in the late seventeenth century and distinguished themselves first as silversmiths, in London, and then in Essex as silk weavers. They have left their mark on the county in many ways, and if they have a fault it is that they have been somewhat unambitious in their choice of Christian names, seldom venturing beyond George and Samuel, to the confusion of those who try to write about them.

The George who is the author of the work under review has led an interesting and varied life that has included serving in the Grenadier Guards, working for Courtaulds for 20 years, and being a Queen's Messenger for 14, the latter career chronicled in *The Travels of a Fat Bulldog* and two subsequent volumes. Now the Fat Bulldog has picked up his pen again to give us glimpses of his life post-retirement, beginning with a trip to St Petersburg in 2001 and ending with a cruise on the White Sea in 2012.

Other people's travelogues can be heavy-going, but Mr Courtauld is amusing and has a good eye for the interesting and the absurd, as well as being an unusually experienced traveller (3½ million miles as a Queen's Messenger, he tells us); so that when he opens an account of a visit to Muscat & Oman by saying that Bhutan, Costa Rica and Oman meet all his criteria for a good holiday destination, one takes note and starts revising future holiday plans. And one can share his excitement at finding silverware made by his eighteenth-century ancestors 'after hours traipsing through corridors and meandering through rooms' in the Winter Palace. He also gives an excellent account of his own heart attack and subsequent treatment which manages to be both clinical and entertaining.

The meat of the book covers his time as High Sheriff of Essex in 2001–2. High Sheriff's memoirs are exceedingly rare, and where they do exist are liable to be dull chronicles of official functions. Mr Courtauld is incapable of writing a dull chronicle, and perhaps takes care to write only about the interesting episodes. So, anyone wanting to get an idea of what a particular High Sheriff got up to in the opening years of the twenty-first century will be grateful for this book. We learn about the appointment process, getting fitted out with a uniform (Mr Courtauld, being of 'robust' build, opted for military uniform rather than velvet Court Dress), and a selection of the 308 visits and engagements that he carried out during his year in office.

That much is familiar to the current High Sheriff, but some things have changed in the intervening

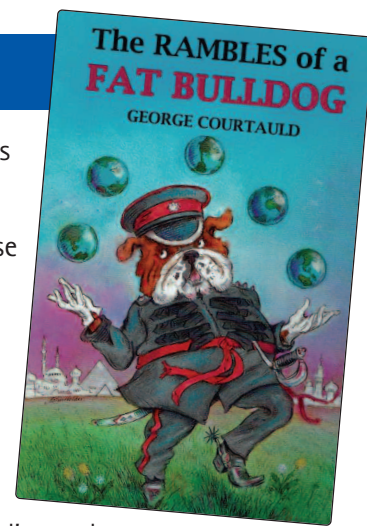
years. One of the High Sheriff's duties is to welcome and entertain High Court judges (so-called 'Red Judges', because of the colour of their robes) when they come to sit in the county. In 2001–2 there were seven; in 2019–20 there will probably only be one, which is now about the norm – our own local Crown Court judges are qualified to deal with the majority of cases. Mr Courtauld's good eye ensures we are given fascinating details of the days he spent in court sitting alongside the Red Judges, including a taxonomy of the various barristers' wigs on show.

Entertaining the judges consists principally of laying on a dinner party, and Mr Courtauld's lively accounts of a couple of these should not necessarily be taken as a reliable indication of current norms. All incoming High Sheriffs are told that everyone does the job their own way, and Mr Courtauld's way was very much his own. Having said that, his summer Garden Party and autumn Justice Service are still very recognisable events, apart from the numbers involved (600 guests at the former, with over 30 chauffeurs to be fed and watered separately, and about 700 at the latter: now about 350 and 400 respectively) and the sad fact that the Shire Hall is no longer available for refreshments after the Justice Service.

Another fundamental change is that since the passing of the Courts Act 2003 High Sheriffs are no longer responsible for the enforcement of High Court writs (in practice the work was delegated to the Under Sheriff and bailiffs, for which they, but not the High Sheriff, were rewarded with a percentage of the value of the goods recovered: 'the best that has happened was when we impounded a plane from Stansted airport'). So Mr Courtauld's account of a day spent with a bailiff doing his rounds has become something of an historical curiosity, as are his memories of Bullwood Hall Prison, Hockley, which finally closed in 2013, its site now being redeveloped for housing.

This is a book that should be read by anyone interested in Essex's institutions and traditions, and as a contemporaneous account it will be read for as long as anyone is interested in the history of Essex. However, it should not be treated as an indication of attitudes widely held or terminology generally used in the early twenty-first century, and perhaps because the book is published by the Essex Women's Advisory Group (which he co-founded), Mr Courtauld is careful to point out that 'all opinions, politically incorrect ideas and over-the-top remarks are...mine alone, and are not to be associated with any of the organisations or positions with which I am concerned.' You have been warned.

James Bettley, former High Sheriff of Essex 2019–20.





# Book Reviews

Christopher Tripp,  
**Thurrock's Deeper Past:  
a confluence of time,**  
pp.vi & 199, ISBN 978-1-78969-111-5.  
Archaeopress Publishing Ltd, 2018, £25.00.

**T**hurrock, a Unitary Authority of 63 square miles, occupies a key stretch of 18 miles of the north Thames shore from Aveley to Corringham. It includes the 66 hectare West Thurrock Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest east of the Dartford Bridge. The book's title is a play on the depth of time and depth within the soil. This is a storybook told by an archaeologist who has been actively involved in some of the excavations in the locality in which he had been brought up. It spans the period of the Palaeolithic of the Purfleet flint tools, a jungle cat and at Grays straight tusked elephant, the Mesolithic flakes at West Tilbury to the nationally important Saxon site at Mucking.

The author records 13 main Paleolithic and Mesolithic excavated sites in Thurrock, and discusses some of their significance. He does the same for 13 Neolithic sites including the Orsett Cock causewayed enclosure and considers possible functions. Blades, scrapers, hammer stones, arrowheads and a cropmark of a cello-shaped enclosure have been found at Orsett. The 11 Bronze Age sites are represented by the Orsett and Mucking Beaker graves, and spearheads from Grays. The double-ditched ring-shaped enclosures at Mucking contained a bronze pin and copper ingot, and the hoard of socketed axes from Thurloe Walk, Grays, are now in the Grays Museum.

D.R. Bain, J. Cole, M. Daniels & C. Fox (eds)  
**The Life and Times of Diarist John  
Bentfield, 1757-1838,**  
pp.144, ISBN 978-1-99983-864-5.  
D. Bain, 2019.

For further details contact the author: david.r.bain@gmail.com

**J**ohn Bentfield was born in Somersham, Suffolk, and was appointed schoolmaster at Thorpe-le-Soken at the age of 22. In 1786 he opened a boarding school, later known as the Academy, in the village, and ran it until 1826. He then farmed Folly Farm, an arable farm of about 24 acres. He served as churchwarden between 1818 and 1831, and was always ready to help families with their paperwork. He married Mary Griggs in 1783; they had no children but he got on well with his nieces and nephews.

He kept the Diary in the years 1828-31. The entries are short but paint a picture of a busy man who enjoyed the social life of the village and also seeing relatives and friends further afield. The Diary is factual but his views sometimes come through. He signed a petition against Roman Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and one against the slave trade the following year. The Swing riots were

International trade was being carried on to and from the Thurrock shoreline.

The Iron Age is represented by 19 sites. Gun Hill, Tilbury, overlooking the strategic bend in the River Thames has produced evidence of smithing, hearths, buildings and a huge post erected at the summit. Cattle husbandry is evidenced by droveways and enclosures, and Corringham has the distinction of having produced a hoard of 2,300 Iron Age coins. The 17 Roman sites include probable roads at Orsett, Tilbury and Chadwell Heath, a farmstead at Mucking and a tessellated pavement indicative of a villa at Grays. An unusually high density of pottery on the East Tilbury foreshore supports other evidence that this was a major crossing point of the Thames. The five post-Roman early medieval sites include sunken floored buildings at Chadwell St Mary and Stifford but the settlement site at Mucking justifiably receives lengthy description.

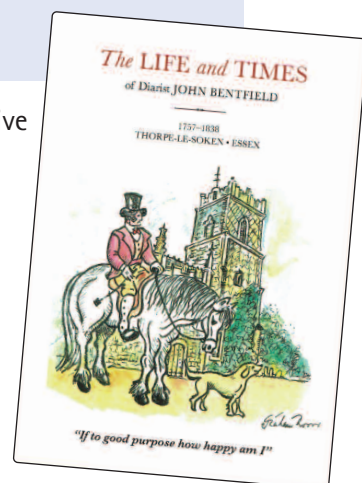
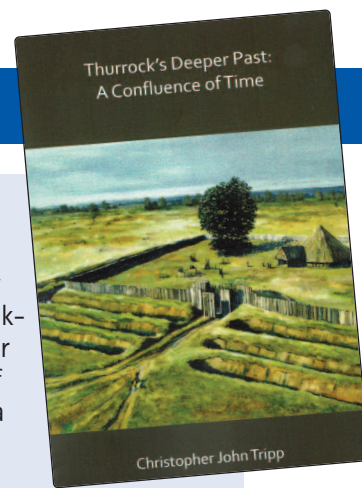
The illustrations are of good quality and add significantly to the publication. The text is of a colloquial style aimed at the layman who has an interest in their locality, and is personalised with the anecdotes of the author's recollections. An index would have assisted search within the body of the texts. Despite some quirks, the bibliography is extensive; many of the references are taken from *Panorama*, the Journal of the Thurrock Local History Society.

James Kemble

recorded in factual and not emotive terms. In noting the seventh anniversary of his wife's death, he described her as 'invaluable'.

Each week certain activities were always mentioned: church services on Sunday, clothes washing on Monday, and the arrival of the newspaper on Saturday. His position as churchwarden entailed attendance at the Vestry meeting which was responsible for the repair of the roads, alterations to the church (which sparked protest among some parishioners), and the poor law. Part-time employment on the land and high prices meant that labourers often needed relief which was usually provided in their own homes and not the workhouse. One matter rarely commented on in the Diary was his responsibility for church music.

Frequent comments were made on the weather and whether it rained on St Swithin's day was always recorded. Socialising in the village mainly entailed attendance at teas and dinners. He made frequent journeys into Colchester, and these usually included dinner at the Angel. Journeys further afield required



# Book Reviews

careful planning, such as his journey to Prittlewell to see his brother in 1830. He usually rode or drove his gig, but a journey to London involved the stage coach for part of the way.

The Diary is printed in full, and is supplemented by introductory material and appendices which make the Diary fully understandable for the modern reader, and enhance the value and usefulness of the book. The introduction covers John Bentfield's

life and the social conditions of the time. Short biographies are provided of the people mentioned in the Diary, and the section entitled Advertisements gives further information on the Academy. A family tree and bibliography are included and the illustrations by Graham Ross add to the value of the text.

Jennifer Ward

Alan Beales,  
**Bures at War: a hidden history of United States Army Air Force station 526,**  
pp.[112], The author, 2020.

To order a copy see: [www.bures.org.uk/journal/](http://www.bures.org.uk/journal/)

It's surprising what makes you suddenly miss someone you have lost – that pang you hadn't felt for a while – perhaps triggered by a scent or a sound or, in this case, a book. When I heard about **Bures at War** I knew straightaway that I just had to have a copy. As regular readers to the *Essex Journal* will know, I have more than a passing interest in the Second World War in general, the American Air Force particularly and more specifically the Martin B-26 Marauder medium bomber, which was concentrated in Essex in great numbers by April 1944. And all of this interest I blame on my late father, Michael Wiffen, for he was a lad during the war and equally interested in aircraft and everything that was going on and told me all about it – and I was a willing audience! One of his tales related to a day after the war, when in the winter of, either 1945-6 or 1946-7, he and his dad, my grandfather, Redvers Wiffen, were invited to go rough shooting, or possibly ferreting (muddled memories already), over in the Bures area. Someone had a truck so a group from Broomfield piled in and had a sporting day out – a rare occurrence and thus remembered. Dad told me how in tramping through various woods in search of game, they came across stacks and stacks of bombs, all piled up and completely accessible, not a guard in sight. Imagine that in this day and age. That was all we knew about what was going on there until now, for author Alan Beales has produced a cracking little book unlocking its history.

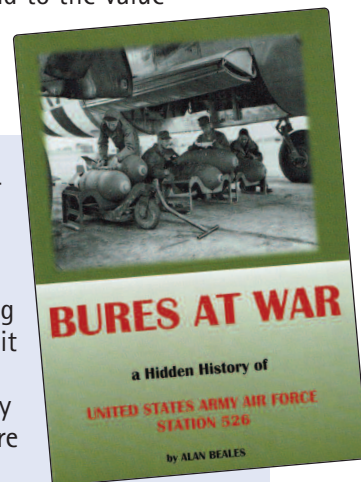
It is obvious that all the airfields in Essex and surrounding counties required massive logistical support, day after day, to keep on fighting. All those Mustangs and Marauders and Havocs all, crucially, needed bombs and bullets to carry on the fight for the liberation of Europe. So a whole host of ancillary units were raised to support the front-line aircraft and the Bures 'Forward Ammunition Depot' or 'Ordnance Ammunition Depot AAF 526' came into existence. Bures was a suitable site for several reasons: it was far enough away from built up conurbations and local airfields so that, in the event of an explosion, damage to local infrastructure would

be limited; it was close to a railway as bombs were transported by train from ports such as Liverpool; it was close to a sand and gravel pit from which to procure aggregate for making the concrete for the roads and it was remote with a small local population thus making security fairly easy. The local woods were also attractive as ready-made camouflage. From this central location bombs were then transported, as required, to local airfields.

The author has undertaken 15 years of research to uncover the story he shares with us. Much of it has been gleaned from talking to local residents who remembered the coming of the Americans. There was little official archive material simply, I suspect, because the mundane nature and low level nature of the units operating from Bures, meant that little paper trail was required and even less survived to come to through to the present. Compared to the 'glamorous' Fighter and Bomb Groups who would want to know about this subject? Thankfully Alan Beales has doggedly and carefully undertaken the research and this book is the result and there is much to digest. Along with the sites where the munitions were kept he also discusses the rail transport side of things (unexpectedly interesting) and includes a section on the fuel depot at Wakes Colne – all in turns fascinating and surprising.

The author has also sourced some contemporary photographs of bombs stacked alongside roads, which really brings home the nature of the job that was undertaken at Bures. It is also extensively illustrated with the author's own photographs of many of the sites and surviving buildings and many map extracts. Due to the scattered nature of the facility and large area it covered, mapping it was going to be difficult and this is one of the weaker aspects of the book (and I only say this tentatively). Perhaps a second edition might result in a larger format that would allow for larger, clearer maps. Apart from that and a few minor inaccuracies, this is a very important addition to the history, a very much 'hidden history' of Essex during the war and I very much recommend it. The only downside is I can't share it with my dad – I know he would have been thrilled to have found out more.

Neil Wiffen





# Vic Gray

Vic Gray was born in Enfield, Middlesex, in 1946. He read English at King's College, Cambridge before training as an archivist and gaining experience in Devon and Suffolk. He was appointed County Archivist of Essex in 1978, a post he held for 15 years. He then took up the challenge of developing the Rothschild Archive, one of the world's great business archives. He was awarded an Honorary Degree by the University of Essex in 1993 for his contribution to the study and publication of Essex history. Vic has been Chairman in turn of the Association of County Archivists, the Society of Archivists and the National Council on Archives, and was awarded an MBE in 2010 for services to British archives. Now widowed, he lives in north-east Suffolk and still enjoys nothing more than truffle-hunting in libraries and archives. His latest book, 'A New World in Essex: the Rise and Fall of the Purleigh Brotherhood Colony, 1896-1903' was published in November.



- 1. What is your favourite historical period?** Late Victorian/ Edwardian. It was a melting pot of ideas on how society and the individual could be changed for the better.
- 2. Tell us what Essex means to you?** A county which so many tides of history have washed over, the perfect place for the historical beachcomber.
- 3. What historical mystery would you most like to know?** What really happened to Raleigh's 100+ colonists on Roanoke Island between their last sighting in 1587 and their disappearance some time before 1590?
- 4. My favourite history book is...** Roy Hattersley's *The Edwardians* (until the next favourite comes along).
- 5. What is your favourite place in Essex?** St Peter's Chapel, Bradwell.
- 6. How do you relax?** Cryptic crosswords.
- 7. What are you researching at the moment?** The hemp industry in north-east Suffolk, a largely forgotten cottage industry more important to this corner of the world than the celebrated Suffolk wool trade.
- 8. My earliest memory is...** Kicking the headmistress on my first day at school (I still blush about it).
- 9. What is your favourite song/piece of music and why?** At the moment, Grieg's *Lyrical Pieces for Piano*; simple, reflective and folk-inspired.
- 10. If you could travel back in time which event would you change?** The 2016 referendum result!

- 11. Which four people from the past would you invite to dinner?** William Morris, H.G. Wells, Octavia Hill and Clement Attlee just to see if four people with different views on social advancement, some practical, some visionary, would fall out before the dessert.
- 12. What is your favourite food?** Sunday roast.
- 13. The history book I am currently reading is...** Adam Nicholson's *The Making of Poetry: Coleridge, the Wordsworths and Their Year of Marvels* – forensic research and beautiful, sensitive writing.
- 14. What is your favourite quote from history?** *Sciant presentes et futuri* – 'Know all men present and future': the opening words of many legal instruments and the essence of what archivists are for.
- 15. Favourite historical film?** I'm torn between Pasolini's *Gospel According to St Matthew* (does that count?) and Ermanno Olmi's *Tree of Wooden Clogs*.
- 16. What is your favourite building in Essex?** Waltham Abbey: for its architecture of course, but also because I got married there.
- 17. What past event would you like to have seen?** The Chartist Meeting on Kennington Common, 1848.
- 18. How would you like to be remembered?** As someone who tried.
- 19. Who inspires you to read or write or research history?** Those whose efforts, great or small, deserve to be rescued from oblivion.
- 20. Most memorable historical date?** I can never remember dates!





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