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The Mystery of the Prittlewell Prince

Julian Whybra relates the amazing tale of the 'Essex Sutton Hoo' dig

The Curious Quest for Quamstowe

Simon Coxall delves into the hidden meaning of an ancient place-name... and reveals it macabre secrets

Also in this issue:

- Secret Life of a Colchester Policewoman
- The Old Rectory, Rayleigh
- Book reviews

Greetings from your new Editor

After many years of sterling service, Neil Wiffen recently stood down from the editorial role and I have stepped rather nervously into his shoes. Neil's excellent work in promoting the *Journal* in particular, and the appreciation of Essex's place in history more widely, have earnt him a place in the Essex Historians Hall of Fame. It is getting a little crowded in there these days, but we can always make room for another one.

A little about me: My Essex credentials are, I hope, impeccable. I was born in Rochford Hospital, grew up in Thundersley and Rayleigh and have lived in several places in the south of the county (Prittlewell, Southchurch, Basildon, Shoebury) Following a short period of exile just across the river at Long Melford in Suffolk, I now live near Colchester. My historical interests are quite varied, but always come back to the Anglo-Saxon period which is about as far back as a student of the English language can hope to go. Here again, Essex ticks several boxes with its early period archaeology (Mucking, Broomfield and Prittlewell), its Middle Saxon sites (such as the fortifications at Shoebury, Witham and Benfleet) mentioned in the literature and for the later period the less favourable dénouement on the Blackwater recorded in a classic Old English poem *The Battle of Maldon*. I have written a number of books and articles about a range of Anglo-Saxon topics – from medical manuscripts to warfare, art styles to religion – and teach the language part-time. The *Twenty Questions* feature will tell you more.

> *'…the various maps and other documents in the Essex Record Office hold a wealth of detail extending across the centuries…'*

This issue of the *Journal* holds its usual wide range of interesting subjects. Julian Whybra opens with an update on the many mysteries surrounding the chamber-tomb found at Prittlewell during road-widening in 2003. The discovery caused a sensation at the time, since Anglo-Saxon chamber tombs were fairly recognisable to earlier inhabitants of the land and were universally believed to contain large quantities of gold. Almost without exception they were opened and the contents removed – if not during Elizabeth I's search for sources of wealth with which to finance the counter-measures against Spanish invasion, then most often during the 19th century fashion among the gentry for treasure-hunting. The construction of railways also frequently revealed the existence of such forgotten monuments, and led to the removal of the contents. Prittlewell escaped these ignominious fates – by a matter of a few yards it seems, given its position between a main road and a railway siding. Julian offers some suggestions for the identity of the tomb's occupant based on the little we know of the East Saxon royal line, derived from Bede and elsewhere.

The recruitment of female police constables began during the First World War, mainly in the role of dedicated carers for women prisoners and their children. Martin Stallion relates the story one such early WPC, whose life and activities in Colchester show her to be far from blameless, even if she might claim to be acting out of a sense of public duty. Watson's story demonstrates how relatively uncomplicated it must have been to establish a fresh identity in an age before every aspect of life was documented.

Following on the theme of crime and punishment, Simon Coxall leads us on a fascinating journey of discovery on the wild borderlands between Clavering and Great Chesterford. Inspired at first by an enigmatic place-name *Constans Slap Station*, Simon diligently peels back the layers of mispronounced and misunderstood versions of the words to reveal the original name for the site – and the reasons for placing it there on the boundaries of two parishes beside an ancient burial mound. As his research shows, the various maps and other documents in the Essex Record Office hold a wealth of detail extending across the centuries, and even relatively humble fieldnames can be a source of revelation to the landscape archaeologist and historian.

Redevelopment of our market towns has obscured as much history as it has revealed, especially in the south of the county where population pressure from London has often encouraged the old to be dismantled in favour of the new. Thomas Milham offers a series of peeks into the past of Rayleigh Rectory before it was 'redeveloped' in the 1960s.

Despite predictions of the demise of print media, the book remains an efficient means of storing and retrieving information. Book reviews have appeared in the pages of the *Journal* for as long as I can recall, and there is no sign of the trickle of new titles related to Essex ceasing. In these pages you will find details of some new titles, and more are planned for the future. It's good to share the burden for those difficult choices in life…

And finally: Essex's place in the history of England, Great Britain and the wider world is seldom appreciated fully. I would therefore welcome articles which celebrate the links between our trading ports and those in far-flung shores, our participation in the great events of our country's history… and the less-known ones which may prove just as interesting. I am inviting contributions on these topics… and this includes you! Please contact me (email editor@essexjournal.co.uk) to discuss your interest and how we can bring it to the wider public through these pages.

It is with great regret that we have heard of the death of Stan Newens, a long-term friend of Essex Journal. Neil Wiffen offers a brief obituary on page 27.

Steve Pollington

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Notes to contributors

Contributions are welcome and should be sent in a Word format to the Honorary Editor at the email listed above. General correspondence can either be emailed or posted to: Amore, Mill Road, Boxted, Essex CO4 5RW. The Editor is more than happy to discuss any proposed articles as he does not guarantee that unsolicited material will be published. Contributors are requested to limit their articles to 2,500/4,000 words, other than by prior agreement with the Editor. Style notes are available.

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Cover illustrations right & below: The Prittlewell Prince – right (© MOLA) and Map of Arkesden dated c1819 – below

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In Brief

Chelmsford City Museum welcomes new definition of treasure

Chelmsford City Museum has declared that recent changes to the Treasure Act will help them to save more important finds for the public. The official definition of treasure will no longer be based solely on the material an artefact was made from (i.e. precious metal), making it much easier for items of national importance made of non-precious metals like bronze to go on public display.

In 2017 Chelmsford Museum almost missed out on a hugely significant find which is now one of the star pieces in their Roman gallery. An exceptionally rare Romano-British figurine wearing a hooded woollen cloak called a *Birrus Britannicus* was found by a metal detectorist in Roxwell. The tiny statue is a unique depiction of someone wearing a distinctively British garment, providing a vital insight into daily life in 4th century Britain.

> *'The Roman 'Hoodie', as it is affectionately known by the museum, is now a key part of its collection.'*

The statue was made from copper alloy, and thus did not qualify as 'treasure' despite its great cultural value. The finder decided to sell it abroad. The Arts Minister prevented it from leaving the country until a UK buyer could be found, which gave Chelmsford City Museum the time it needed to raise the necessary funds. The Roman 'Hoodie', as it is affectionately known by the museum, is now a key part of its collection, giving visitors a tangible link to past residents of the city.

© Chelmsford Museum

Objections to Emended – Octona – 'Great Wilderness': A Reply

Dr. Andrew Breeze

Since this paper was published (EJ Spring 2020), objections have been made to it. They are not linguistic but archaeological, showing that there is a growing body of evidence for Roman Essex (including the Bradwell-on-Sea region) as well populated, and not a heavily-wooded 'desolation'. How can this contradiction between linguistic and archaeological evidence be resolved? The answer is simple. There can be no doubt that emended Celtic *Octona* 'great remote place, great desolation' suited Bradwell's local landscape in pre-Roman times. Later developments do not alter this. An analogy makes the point clear. In London are the districts of Shepherd's Bush and Chalk Farm. Their names survive, even though there is now no shepherd at the first or farm at the second. The world is full of place-names like these, out of joint with later social and economic change. So with British-Latin *Octona* 'great wilderness'. This Celtic form was adopted by the Romans and remained in use, even when the arrival of farmers and the clearing of forests meant that it was not as true as it was originally.

Thomas Plume's Library – Grant for Repairs

It was announced in February that a grant of £67,962 has been approved for urgent repairs to the library of Dr. Thomas Plume. It is one of the oldest public libraries in the country with a unique collection of books and 'pamphlets' (often the printed pages of book not trimmed or bound between covers), mainly dating from the 16th and 17th centuries, with some portraits on wooden panels and other paintings. The contents of the library may be consulted by appointment.

The library was founded in 1704 through a bequest in the will of Dr Thomas Plume, Vicar of Greenwich and Archdeacon of Rochester, who was born in Maldon in 1630. Plume bequeathed his collection of some 8,100 books and other items, to be kept in the building made from the ruins of the old St Peter's Church, on the corner of Market Hill and the High Street. **The building is Grade I listed. The grant by Historic England is to be used to** replace the ceiling and repair the library floor, external masonry and windows.

Steve Pollington
Editor

The Mystery of the Prittlewell Prince

Julian Whybra B.A. (Hons)

The early Saxon burial chamber unearthed at Prittlewell in 2003 contained a wealth of interesting finds, which offer many parallels to Mound 1 at Sutton Hoo, subject of the recent film 'The Dig'. The Prittlewell tomb was certainly of 'royal' status and the goods buried in it show connections with lands across the North Sea and as far as Italy under its Lombard kings. Now, the possible identity of the occupant can be discussed in the light of more accurate dating evidence.

After the first publications on the 2003 excavation of the East Saxon royal burial chamber in Prittlewell I wrote an article for *Essex Journal* on the identity of the chamber's occupant based on the dating of the grave goods at the time.[1]

It had been suggested originally that the burial artefacts provided approximate dates of manufacture of between 600 and 630-650, implying the burial would have taken place in the latter half of this period or just afterwards. Whilst the burial chamber contained Christian objects, the burial mound and grave, filled with useful items demonstrating power and wealth, hinted at a high-status pagan ceremony but without the lavishness found in the Sutton Hoo burial.

The preferred candidate for the burial mound's occupant was King Sæberht of the East Saxons (reigned 604 x 616/7). For various reasons I found this improbable and instead made the case for its having been King Sigeberht II 'the Good' (reigned 653? X ?) or alternatively a princely member of the Sleddinga royal family.

1. A reconstruction of the Prittlewell princely burial chamber based on painstaking research by Museum of London Archaeology (© MOLA)

2. The 1,400-year old painted wooden box (© MOLA)

This year over 40 leading experts in a range of specialisms from Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) completed their research of the burial and its artefacts. On 11th May 2019 a newly-refurbished archaeology gallery at Southend-on-Sea's Central Museum opened, housing a permanent exhibition of the chamber's contents and exploring the evidence for what is believed to be the earliest Anglo-Saxon Christian princely burial ever unearthed in the United Kingdom.[2]

Much more is on display to the public than in previous exhibitions including the remains of a unique 1,400-year old painted wooden box, the only surviving example of early Anglo-Saxon painted woodwork. A visit to the new exhibition is highly-recommended.

One of the archaeologists' achievements has been, crucially, to recover evidence to reduce significantly the parameters for the date of the burial. Consequently, any identification of the tomb's occupant now has to take this latest research into account.

Unearthed from the deep, timber-walled underground room were over one hundred objects of gold, silver, iron, copper, and glass, some of which can be dated. But it is the latest research which has enabled greater accuracy in dating artefacts and a revision of the burial date. All that was left of a wooden coffin and its iron fittings was a dark stain on the soil, yet the position of artefacts within the coffin indicate that its occupant was 5ft. 8 ins. tall. All that remained of the body was too decomposed for any DNA to be found but fragments of tooth enamel were enough to suggest that he was older than six, but not enough for radio-carbon dating analysis.

Post-dating MOLA's printed booklet and report are the results of the radio-carbon dating of samples from one of the drinking horns and maple wood from a small drinking cup from the tomb. Both provided reliable dating evidence suggesting a date of 575 x 605.[3]

Two gold coins, tremisses from Merovingian France, were also found in the chamber. Originally MOLA dated one to the early seventh century and the second from a series that was in use from between 570 x 580-670. In 2004 Gareth Williams, Curator of Early Medieval Coinage at the British Museum, suspected that they might date to about A.D. 600-630 but that once they had been fully examined, they should help to date the grave far more precisely.[4] That further research has now been completed and the dating revised. It has been established that they could not have been minted any earlier than 580. This narrows the dates of the grave goods to 580 x 605.

The revised dating leads necessarily to an attempt to re-identify the grave's occupant. King Sæberht's father, Sledda, who was dead by 604, was pagan and would not have had any Christian element to his burial. King Sæberht converted to Christianity in A.D. 604 but his sons remained pagan and the kingdom reverted to paganism when they succeeded him in 616/7. Since the grave contained Christian artefacts the window for the death and burial of the 'Prittlewell prince' is 604 x 617.

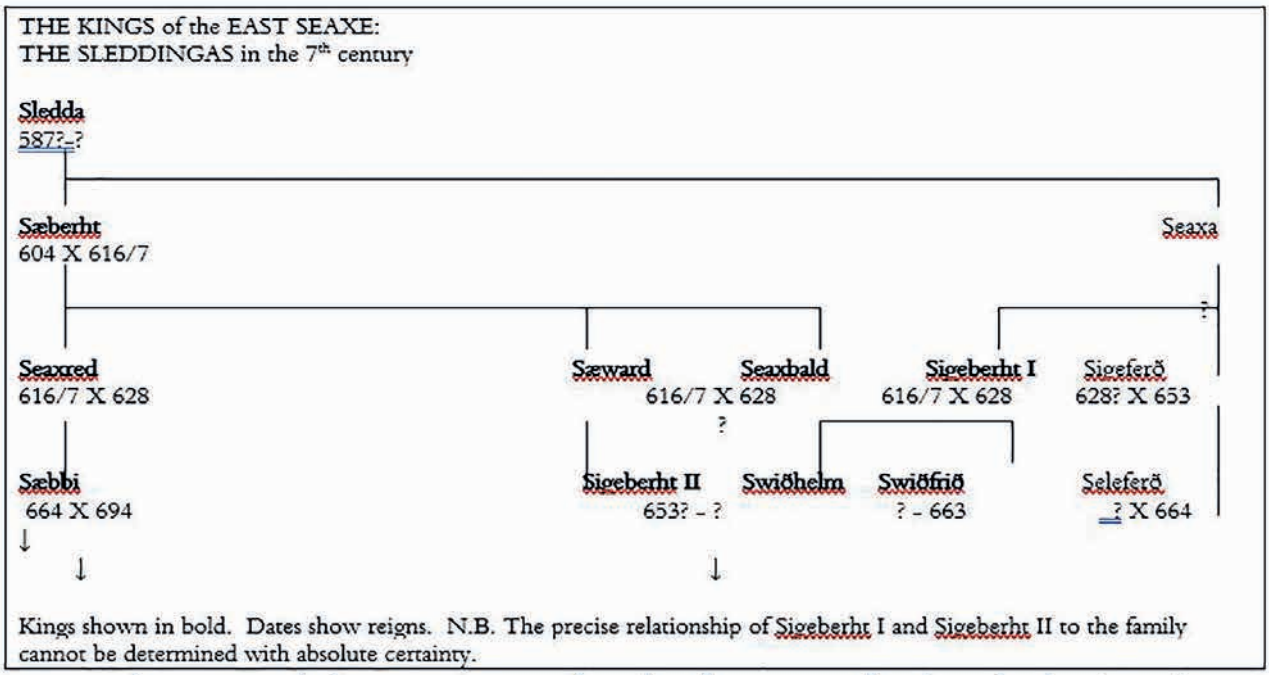
Sæberht, according to some sources, was buried in Westminster Abbey and a local tradition states he lies in Great Burstead churchyard. In addition, the new burial time-frame would exclude Sæberht as well as the much later King Sigeberht II. The only alternative is a princely member of the Sleddinga royal family who converted to Christianity in the period 604 x 617.

The only possible candidate remaining is Sæberht's younger brother, Seaxa. Nothing further is known of the individual beyond the fact that some of his descendants eventually became Kings of the East Seaxe when the senior line died out. The only other alternative occupant of the burial mound would be a male royal family member unknown to history.

Acknowledgements:

I am grateful to MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) and Southend Council for their permission to reproduce the images used above. I would also like to thank Nicola Kalimeris, Head of Communications, MOLA and Ellie Broad, Assistant Curator Archaeology, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council for their assistance in providing further information on the post-MOLA publication research and radio-carbon dating.

3. One of the two gold coins discovered within the immediate vicinity of the man buried in the chamber which have helped archaeologists to refine the dating (© MOLA)



Kings of Essex family tree

The Author:

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

Annotations:

(1) Whybra, Julian, 'The Identity of the Prittlewell Prince', *Essex Journal*, (Autumn 2014), pp. 44-48.

(2) A Prittlewell Princely Burial display interactive app has been launched on-line online where the burial chamber can be explored and more can be found out about the chamber's artefacts, including many that are not on display (https://prittlewellprincelyburial.org).

(3) The full research is published in a MOLA monograph, *The Prittlewell princely burial Excavations at Priory Crescent, Southend-on-Sea, Essex*, 2003, (Museum of London Archaeology, 2019) and a popular book The Anglo-Saxon princely burial at Prittlewell, Southend-on-Sea, (Museum of London Archaeology, 2019). On the website mentioned in fn. 2 under the section 'Anglo-Saxon England's Earliest Dated Princely Burial' can be found information about radio-carbon dating.

(4) Williams, Gareth, 'Prittlewell: Treasures of a King of Essex', *Current Archaeology*, 16, No. 10 (190), (February 2004), p. 431.

"Not so elementary, my dear Watson":

The deeds and deceptions of a Colchester policewoman

Martin Stallion

The police force only began recruiting females as officers with powers of arrest in 1915. Before this, the Metropolitan Police employed 'matrons' whose role was confined to caring for women and children in police custody. This is the story of one of the first women in service in Colchester – and her attempts to overcome the many challenges she faced within the service.

Early days

Dorothy Gladys Watson was the seventh woman to join Colchester Borough Police, and apparently the second to hold the rank of sergeant, although the force records of its female personnel do have some gaps. Her first deception was when she gave her date of birth as 5 March 1897: she was actually born on 5 March 1896, at South Street, Bishops Stortford, to Maria Jane Watson (née Webb and formerly Bavis) and her husband James Henry Watson, a master grocer.

By 1901, the family were living in Suffolk at the Tomb House, Station Road, Framlingham, with two more daughters: Winifred V[iolet], born *ca*1898 and Ruth G[ertrude], born *ca*1900, both at Framlingham. James' occupation was now grocer's manager. Ten years later, they were at Fairfax House, Kingsway, Mildenhall, with a further child, Evelyn James D[enny], born *ca*1904, again at Framlingham. James was now a beer merchant and Dorothy, aged 15, a schoolteacher.

Policewoman Watson

We next encounter her during World War 1 as a member of the Ministry of Munitions Police, supplied by the Women's Police Service set up by Mary Allen and Margaret Damer Dawson. Dorothy joined the WPS in July 1916 and is listed in Mary Allen's memoirs as a sergeant at the Gretna Unit, a munitions factory, in October that year, together with two constables, Norah O'Sullivan and [Sarah] Evelyn Spencer who also later joined Colchester Borough Police. It is possible that Dorothy was rapidly promoted to sub-inspector in charge of the Wood Lane and Hurlingham Unit in London from January 1917. This unit consisted of bomb packing factories owned by W E Blake Explosive Loading Co. Unfortunately, Allen's memoirs only give the sub-inspector's surname with no forename or initial. Allen does reproduce the following letter from the factory, dated 16 November 1918:

Dear Madam

We wish to take this opportunity of expressing our admiration of the able manner in which the women police, under the command of Sub-Inspector Watson, carried out their duties on the occasion of the recent disastrous fire which occurred here

We wish to draw special attention to the tactful and efficient manner in which many painful duties were performed, not the least being guarding the factory during the night following such an experience

Signed pp J Blake, Director, C.S. [Company Secretary?]

This fire cost the lives of two men and 11 women employed there: all 13 were buried in a single grave.

One of Dorothy's fellow sergeants at Gretna Green was Mary Jude, from Wisbech in Cambridgeshire. In April 1920, Mary became a policewoman, possibly the first, in Cambridge Borough Police then in 1929, married Dorothy's now-widowed father: they later moved to Colchester for the rest of their lives

Dorothy left the WPS in May 1919, joining Hove Borough Police on 4 July that year at a salary of £2/7/6 a week, giving her residence as Colchester. In Hove, she encountered an ex-Gretna colleague, Mabel Read. In 1921, the two women investigated a fraudulent medium, Elizabeth Taylor, by posing as clients. Dorothy was told that she was going to India, would marry a fair man in Government service and would come into money. For these and other supposedly fake predictions Mrs Taylor was fined £2. However, as we will see, Dorothy did eventually marry a man **from** India and in government service (Army and police), so perhaps the predictions were not so far out!

After nearly six years in Hove, she moved back to Colchester on 3 April 1925 to take up a vacant post

of policewoman and was promoted to sergeant on 12 April 1937 at a salary of £4/10/-. She is described on her Essex County record of service as 5ft 6in tall, with fresh complexion, blue eyes and fair hair. Her religion is given as Church of England, although there is a letter on her file from the Chief Constable of Hove in which he says:

I think it only right to tell you that she is a Christian Scientist – I don't know if you look on this as being a Crank [sic], but I have had no trouble in regard to it, as she conforms to the regulations of this force, in that if unfit for duty through illness, she attends the Police Surgeon.

Enter our hero

David Miller Kirk, inevitably known as Jock, was born at Larkhall, Lanarkshire on 14 May 1908 to Mr and Mrs James Kirk, although Jock's marriage certificate gives his father's name as George and occupation as carpenter. He joined Colchester Borough Police as a probationary constable on 9 November 1934. He was 5ft 11½in tall and had come from V Field Battery, Royal Artillery, Mhow, India

On 21 August 1937, Dorothy and Jock were married at Christ Church, Paddington stating her age as 34, *ie* a date of birth *ca*1903 – deception number two! His address was recorded as 32 Queens Gardens, London W2 and hers as 16 Balkerne Gardens, Colchester. The witnesses were Irene Wakeford and J R Parker, so probably not family members. Police regulations of the time required policewomen to resign on marriage so the marriage was kept secret and Dorothy remained in the force – deception number three. The 1939 Register, compiled as a kind of census to enable the issuing of identity cards, shows Dorothy still living at 16 Balkerne Gardens but the now Detective Constable Jock is nearly three-quarters of a mile away at 140 Butt Road as a lodger with Cyril and Ruth Joslin. Was this another deception?

Shortly after the outbreak of World War 2, Jock was recalled to the Army on 1 December 1939 and by November 1943, he was a Royal Artillery major serving in Italy. On 16 June 1944, not long after D-Day, he was killed in action in Normandy serving with 301 Battery, 127 Field Regiment and is buried in Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados. Dorothy finally admitted to the marriage in order to claim a widow's pension from both the Army and the police, causing a complicated and worried correspondence between the Borough Council and the Home Office. The Home Office decided to raise no objection to the police widow's pension, as the police authority had not terminated her own service on learning of the marriage. She apparently also got the Army pension.

After the War

The Police Act 1946 reduced the number of police forces in England and Wales, and on 1 April 1947 Dorothy and her Colchester Borough colleagues were transferred into the Essex County Constabulary. Within a few days, it was announced that she wished to be known as Kirk, not Watson, and that she would be supervising the women police in the Braintree and Clacton divisions, as well as Colchester. In August 1948, she applied, unsuccessfully, for a vacancy as staff officer to the HMI, the previous incumbent, Barbara Denis de Vitré, having been appointed as Assistant Inspector of Constabulary.

In the spring and early summer of 1951, she took charge of all the women police in the county while her inspector was at the Police College, Ryton-on-Dunsmore. By 1952, she was nearing the age for compulsory retirement but in February the Home Office wrote to the Chief Constable, Jonathan Peel, that

the suggestion has been made that [she] should be considered for a suitable award for distinguished service in a future Honours List

Presumably this would have been the Queen's Police Medal but we shall never know as nothing came of it. As the Home Office letter said, it would have been unusual at that time for a sergeant to receive such an award. It's also surprising that the suggestion did not come from Peel: was it from the Assistant HMI, Barbara de Vitré?

In anticipation of the award, Peel extended Dorothy's service for six months, to September that year. When it did not materialise, he wrote in a memo at the end of May that *I do not propose to grant a further extension, as a matter of principle,* so on 4 September 1952, after a total of 33 years and 62 days' service, Dorothy retired with a pension of £350 a year. That wasn't the end of her police work, however, as she served in Colchester as a sergeant in the Special Constabulary until 3 October 1960

She continued to live in Colchester but died on 29 December 1976 at Brook House, Montford Bridge, Shropshire, from bronchitis and heart disease.

Good cop, bad cop

In addition to the probable tribute following the explosives factory fire, Dorothy received three commendations during her career. In 1938, the Colchester Watch Committee praised her meritorious conduct during a strike at a canning factory and also in a case of attempted suicide. In 1942, the Chief Constable commended her actions leading to the arrest of two women for thefts from hotels and dance halls and in 1945, the magistrates complimented her very able manner in conducting enquiries about a case of abortion.

She held the Defence Medal from WW2 and was one of the first recipients, male or female, of the Police Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, which had only been instituted in June 1951.

On the other hand, she had to apologise in 1944 to a firm of Colchester solicitors for her intervention in an eviction dispute in which she had given (wrong) legal advice to their clients, who were the tenants.

The year 1951 saw her facing three charges of misconduct, for *unlawful or unnecessary exercise of authority*. In March, a woman complained about her objectionable manner and incivility when interviewing her about thefts from two doctors' surgeries in Braintree. The crimes did not result in any prosecution but, as the woman was the only person who had access to both premises, it seems likely the complaint was bluster on her part and the charge was dismissed.

In June, a woman in Colchester complained of her aggressive manner in making enquiries about a handbag and money allegedly stolen from a rummage sale. It transpired that the bag had been sold for a penny! Charge again dismissed. The final complaint in November was about her bullying manner in enquiries about a stolen wallet, for opening the complainant's handbag and going through private correspondence in it. This charge was also dismissed.

Oh what a tangled web

Dorothy's younger sister, Ruth, also joined Colchester Borough Police, on 18 January 1929. She had been born in the summer of 1899 but she declared her year of birth as 1903, presumably because she was already over the age limit of 30 for recruits. She resigned in April 1932 and married Joshua Bolland, a schoolmaster.

Mary Roff joined Colchester Police on 20 February 1920. She had also been a member of the Women's Police Service: from November 1917, she had served at factories in Gloucester and Queensferry before moving in November 1918 to Anglesey Constabulary, until transferring to Colchester, where she declared her age as 31, so a birth date of *ca*1889. In fact, she was five years older than that, having been born Mary Hannah Dale Corbishley at Walmer, Kent in March 1884. She was a widow: her husband, Harry Neame Roff, had died in 1910 only a year after their marriage.

Lorna Williams joined the Borough force in January 1940 on transfer from the Metropolitan Police. In the spring of 1941, she secretly married another Colchester officer, George McGhee, hiding her wedding ring on a chain under her shirt. She soon became pregnant and had to admit to the marriage when she fainted at work in July that year. She had to resign on the spot but was immediately taken on as a clerk for the force. At the beginning of 1942, George was called up and Lorna was re-appointed as a policewoman, remaining in post until after the end of the War.

It seems incredible that these women were (mostly!) able to get away with false ages and secret marriages. Clearly, the Chief Constable never asked for birth certificates from his policewomen but in a force of only 50-60 officers, it must have been almost impossible to hide the relationships between the women and men. Did the rest of the force just turn a blind eye? Dorothy's husband Jock presumably knew about her WW1 service but obviously didn't work out that if she was 34 in 1937, she would have been only 13 when she joined the WPS!

Acknowledgments:

Essex Police Museum for access to Dorothy's file

Derek Oakensen for the photograph of Dorothy in Hove and other information

Sources:

Dorothy Watson/Kirk's personal file at Essex Police Museum [ROS 4056]

Census 1901 and 1911

1939 Register

Birth, marriage and death certificates

Colchester Borough Police. *Police work in pamphlets*. Essex Record Office A7445

Mary Allen. *The pioneer policewoman*. Chatto and Windus, 1925

Lorna McGhee. *War memories*. Essex Record Office T/Z 25/1907

Derek Oakensen. Antipathy to ambivalence: politics and women police in Sussex, 1915–45. Sussex archaeological collections, v153 (2015), p171-189

Maureen Scollan. *Sworn to serve: police in Essex 1840-1990*. Phillimore, 1993

The history of female policing has been covered in a number of titles. The first is by Mary Allen. *The Pioneer Policewoman*. (Chatto and Windus, 1925) dealing with the early history of the subject. This was Allen's first published work and details her role as commandant of the Women's Auxiliary Service from 1920 onwards.She was herself a militant suffragette and served three prison terms for her political activities. She took part in a number of hunger strikes while in prison and was repeatedly force fed. Allen's first vision was of "women police, to arrest women offenders, attend them at police stations, escort them to prison and give them proper care." Martyn Lockwood's The Essex Police Force: A History (Tempus, 2009) is more restricted in its scope but offers an overview of WPCs at work.

The Curious Quest for Quamstowe

Simon Coxall

Opaque and obscure place-names are sometimes of great antiquity, but only dedicated detective work can shed light on their meaning. 'Constans Slap Station' near Clavering is one such, originally named in the Anglo-Saxon period. The nature of the site and its features are examined here in the light of recent studies.

'… i the munt of Calvarie, ther ure Laverd hongede, wes the cwalm-stowe, ther leien ofte licomes i-rotet buvene orthe ant stunken swithe stronge.'

Medieval English dated between 1225 and 1240, this passage translates as:

'On the mount of Calvary, where our Lord hung, was the **death-place** where often rotted corpses lay above the earth and stank exceedingly strong.'(AncreneWisse 1225-40 in Hasenfratz R (2000).

Introduction

Clues as to the mysteries of Essex's darker past abound within the maps and papers of Essex Record Office. Fieldnames are a constant source of revelation to the landscape archaeologist and historian. The Quamstowe site recently identified in northwest Essex is just such a surprising discovery. Moreover, it is one that begins to reach back into those centuries of early-medieval Britain often bereft of historical or archaeological evidence. The trail leading to its discovery involves local legend, antiquarian excavations of Romano-British (RB) archaeology, references in medieval and Tudor documents, and academic studies of judicial execution in the medieval period. But first I present a review of the landscape surrounding its discovery (Figs.1 and 2).

Liminal landscapes along the Roman Road (Margary 21b)

Northwest Essex plays host to one of Essex's surviving tracts of Roman road (Margary, 1955, p.174, 21b). Today referred to as Beard's Lane, this straight green lane, enters Essex from Meesden, just across the Hertfordshire border, before climbing up to some of the highest land in Essex through the parishes of Langley, Clavering, Elmdon and Arkesden (Fig.2). As such it forms part of the Roman road from the Iron Age (IA) and Roman small town of Braughing (Herts) to Great Chesterford's early fort and later RB town (Fig.1).

Connecting both these early settlements, the road's straightness and scant regard for the settlements in

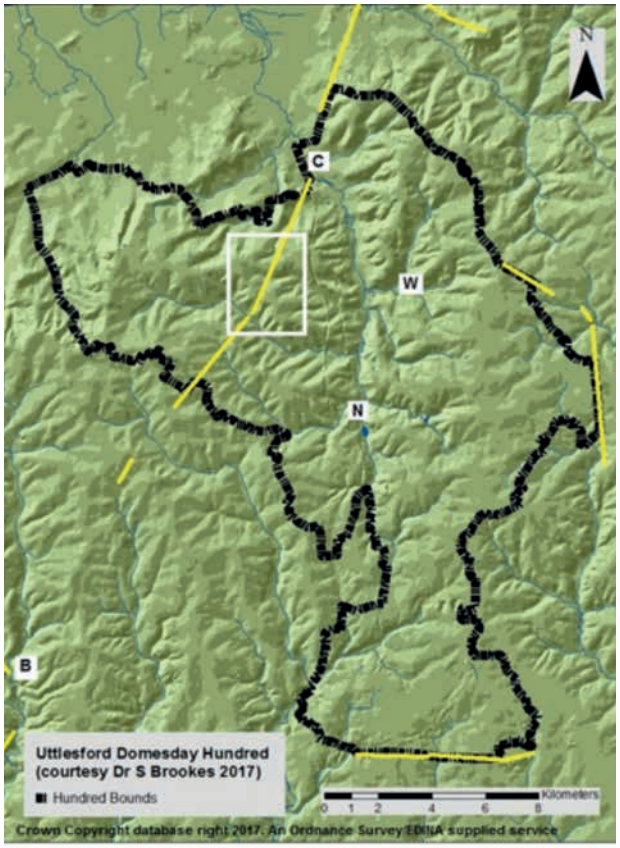


Fig.1 Relief map of Uttlesford indicating the courses of known Roman roads. Inset box indicates the Quamstowe site area referred to in text along the course of the Roman Road (Margary 21b)

the Cam and Stort valleys suggest it as being an official road perhaps of military construction '*taking a direct route from one place of military or civilian importance to another*' (Williamson 2016, p.270).

The parish boundaries

The road also defines parish boundaries in NW Essex. Firstly that between Clavering and Langley, then proceeding further north-east along its course towards Great Chesterford the boundaries between Elmdon and Arkesden parishes. The nineteenth century parish

Fig.2 Section of Beard's Lane RB road (A – B). Parish boundaries are indicated by dotted lines and converge at the ford (C).Rumbergh RB tumulus (D) and Clavering Farm. formerly 'Fitzwilliams', are indicated.

boundaries of Clavering, Arkesden and Elmdon all meet at a point (C on Fig.2), where the Roman road fords a minor tributary watercourse of the River Stort.

Then 460m south-west of the ford next to the Roman road lies the surviving Romano-British burial mound known today as Rumberry Hill (D on Fig.2).

The emergence of Constans Slap Station and the Quamstowe

Against this backdrop of Roman road, Roman barrow and the convergence of parish boundaries a local legend then emerges.

Experienced on a cold, wet morning in March, one can easily appreciate why landscape archaeologists call such landscapes 'liminal places'. Located on the higher ground (approximately 129m OD) village settlements are some distance away and farmsteads sparse. A little over a hundred years ago, amidst an agricultural depression, the clay hereabouts was spared the plough for many years (*Essex Naturalist* 1912) and periodically over the centuries the difficult clays have been taken in and out of cultivation – surrendered to woodland and thorny scrub. This is a liminal place indeed – on the edge of settlement and cultivation.

Local knowledge then takes up the story.

This area has for generations of local people farming the heavy clays been known by the name of ***Constans Slap Station***[1]. And with the name comes a legend that a tunnel dating back to ancient times runs from this point to Great Chesterford. The origins of such legends of course are notoriously difficult to pin down, but here research has shown tucked away in a forgotten corner of a map of Arkesden dated c 1819 (ERO D/DYo 1) a reference to the name ***Constans Slough*** which appears too similar to be dismissed.

This map depicts in detail the parish of Arkesden, or rather a part thereof, for as the map approaches the parish's north-western boundary formed by the Roman road all detail peters out to nothing. It is in this marginal blank space that one finds in small script the words *Constans Slough* (Fig.4).

The map contains sufficient detail of Arkesden's farms and surviving field boundaries to overlay the 1819 map upon a current aerial photograph of the parish. In

Fig.3 The ford along the Beard's Lane Roman road looking south-west. At this point the parishes of Clavering, Arkesden and Elmdon meet and overlook the qualmstow

(Photograph – Author)

1 This naming practice and its accompanying legend was recounted by the late Eggy Abrahams on the occasion of the Millennium walk around the Clavering parish bounds.

Fig.4 Constans Slough (circled) shown distant from cultivated fields on a Map of Arkesden dated c1819.

doing so the script *Constans Slough* overlays the point where the parish boundaries join at the Roman road's crossing of the ford (Fig.5).

So what meaning can be drawn from this strange placename -***Constans Slough/Slap station***?

'***Station'*** could relate to a term that was frequently used by earlier antiquarians, including Neville, to denote areas of Roman settlement/forts in Britain.

Constans is more difficult. It is just possible that Constans is a reference to the 4th century Roman emperor of that name? Is it mere coincidence that coins of Reece period 17 covering Constans's reign (337-350 AD) represent the most common finds of RB coinage?

Slough/Slap, however, remains enigmatic. Here research, as is so often the case, relies on the groundwork of those who have gone before. Bob Wood, a pioneer of the Essex Place-names Project and researcher for the Clavering Landscape History Group, recorded some years ago a reference to a field name ***Qualmstoweslap*** apparently lying in Clavering parish. His research was later developed by Stuart Moore and Jackie Cooper of the Clavering Landscape History Group. Though not definitively located, phonetically perhaps the name

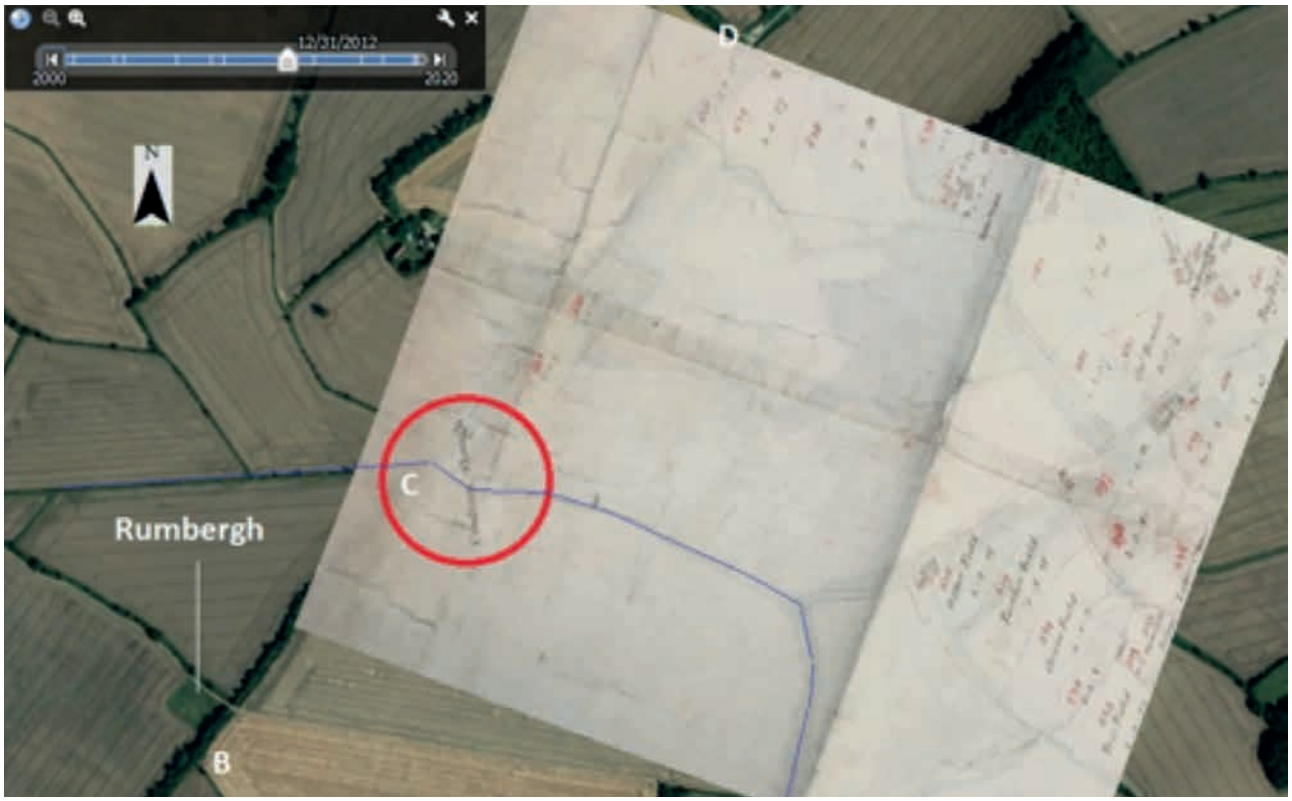


Fig.5 The 1819 map of Arkesden (Constans Slough circled) overlain upon an aerial photograph of the point at which the Roman road (Beard's Lane) crosses the ford

Constans Slap could represent a corruption over time of ***Qualmestowslap.***

Qualmestoweslap

So where was this ***Qualmestoweslap***[2] and what was it?

Clavering is well served by documents describing the dealings of its medieval farms. Documents dated to 1589 relate to the estate of Fitzwilliam farm, now Clavering farm, situated in Clavering parish some 640 metres south east of the Roman Road (ERO: D/DJg Q1/1).

Specifically the record of 1589 refers to a Bassel field as being 54 acres and lying in either or both parishes of Arkesden and Elmdon. Bassel field is abutted by Morelye Wood to the north and west, a common lane from Clodmore Hill to the Clapgate on the east and Bassel meadow to the south which is described as being of 6 acres.

Bassel meadow is then described as having Bassel field to its north and the land called Broad Field to its south. One head abuts upon or adjoins the common lane to the Clapgate towards the east and the other head or part thereof abuts upon or lies next to a little close or pightle commonly called *Quamstowepightle.*

A second document in the same bundle then has two references amongst a list of fields forming the lands of Fitzwilliam's farm. This document is undated, however, comparing its script with others in the bundle I suggest it can be dated to sometime in the .16th or 17th centuries.

This refers to two parcels of land:

Quamstowe slat[3] *meadow*
1a 0r 1p in area

and as arable

Quamstowe slat and Clark field
10a 3r 35 p in area

Then a further list of fields for Fitzwilliams Farm of the late 18th century (ERO: D/DJg Q1/3) records only Clark field at 14a 1r 24p suggesting that by then the old Quamstowe names had fallen out of use and their land become absorbed within a larger manifestation of Clark field.

The Bassel fieldnames have since disappeared from the record. However, an estate map for Fitzwilliams (ERO: D/DJg P1 Fig. 6) of 18th century date helps identify the location of these fields and others mentioned in the record of the farm dated 1589 (ERO: D/DJg Q1/1).

The 54 acres Bassel field is no more, but its remnants depicted as Little and Great Bassel, together with Broad Field and Clark's Field are shown. Reviewing the abuttals given by the 1589 document the map reveals a small unnamed rectangular field abutting the Roman road and its ford crossing. This appears to equate to the location of the former *Quamstowepightle*. Moreover, its position corresponds precisely with the Arkesden map's positioning of *Constans Slough*. It appears Quamstowepightle and Constans Slough are indeed

2 Researches thus far have found only these two references to ***Quamstowe***. While they appear to be one and the same as the ***Qualmstow-slap*** references originally found by Bob Wood research continues to identify any further mentions of the name.

3 My reading of this last part is slat as opposed to slap

referring to the same small parcel of land abutting the RB road as it crosses the ford where the three parish boundaries meet.

So what was a Quamstowe and why is one here?

In the passage quoted at the beginning of this article 'cwalm-stowe' is used to describe the site of the crucifixion of Christ – his place of execution – Golgotha. Quamstowe is derived originally from the Old English '*cwealmstow'* and is defined as a 'place of execution'. It combines *cwealm* 'death/slaughter' and *stow* 'place'. Its usage can be traced in early-medieval documents. Ælfric of Eynsham uses the term several times in describing places of execution around 996-997AD (Skeat, 1881). In his sermon on St George, Ælfric depicts the saint as being dragged face down through the streets on his way to the *cwealm-stowe*. It also appears in a few charter bounds. Those for Chilcomb, Hants (dated 909), Fenstanton, Huntingdonshire (1012)and Wanborough, Wilts(1047-70) each refer to *cwealmstowa*. Interestingly the latter two are sites located close to hundredal and/or shire boundaries. They are also adjacent to a RB road and the Icknield Way respectively.

Professor Andrew Reynolds (2009) who has studied such execution sites in detail advises:

'... One of the most unambiguous terms to describe a place of execution is cwealmstow, 'killing place', and a judicial context is not in doubt. Three examples are known, with a broad distribution: two examples from central Wessex and one from central eastern England. The term appears to have been rare, although long-lived, as the earliest example from the Chilcomb (Hampshire) bounds of 909 is described as 'old' (p 61).

Fig.6 Part of the map of the lands of Fitzwilliam Farm c1775 (ERO D/DJg P1) showing the Bassel fields, Broad Field, Clarks Field and Rumborough

Fig.7 Boundaries of the estate map (Fig.6) drawn upon a current aerial image (courtesy GoogleEarth) indicating the location of Quamstowe as defined in the 1589 account of Fitzwilliams Farm

Clavering's *Quamstowe* now presents evidence of a fourth such site. The earliest laws of the medieval period saw an increasing centralisation of the power to judicially execute those who had committed offence. These laws dating from the seventh to 11th centuries prescribe the death penalty for a range of crimes from theft and robbery to fighting within the king's court, treason, harbouring an outlaw or deserting the king's army. Anglo-Saxon lords also had the right to try and execute thieves caught locally on their estates or from within their own household. The prevalence of gallows field names in Essex[4] would suggest that in some places there survived a long-standing tradition of local 'justice' and execution.

It appears the location of our *quamstow* in northwest Essex is one such place. The Beard's Lane Roman road is clearly an ancient routeway and the convergence of parish boundaries indicate its relevance as a territorial and hundredal boundary.

Reynolds (2011) advises us that:

'One of the most remarkable aspects of Anglo-Saxon execution sites is their consistent location on territorial boundaries.' (p.10)

also:

'A highly distinctive feature of Anglo-Saxon execution sites and cemeteries is their visibility. They are frequently placed either immediately adjacent to or in prominent view of routes of communication either by road or water.' (p.11)

Our *quamstow* as described above, fits both these criteria.

Ancient Monuments and Deviant burials

One other aspect then suggests further possibilities. The wider study of early-medieval execution sites and the cemeteries of their victims suggest such places may also have had a connection with ancient monuments in the early-medieval landscape. The association between ancient burial mounds and superstitious belief in the early medieval has long been recognised (Semple 1998). Burial mounds dating back into prehistory were used both as places of assembly and secondary burial during the early medieval period. Moreover, some sites such as Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, Walkington Wold, Yorks and Stockbridge Down, Hants have seen ancient barrows used as sites for execution cemeteries (Reynolds 2011).

Our Quamstowe has the Rumbergh RB burial mound nearby. Just a short walk along the Beards Lane RB road, Rumbergh is visible today, was known by this

4 A brief search for 'gallow' in the Essex Placenames list registers their presence as field-names in around 50 different parishes. Certainly Saffron Walden's ***Gallows field*** coincides with three or perhaps four parish boundaries being those of Wenden, Walden itself, Newport and Thunderley. Essex Place-names Project also identifies two other fieldnames approximating to Quamstow in Ingrave and Chigford parishes. These remain the subject of ongoing research.

name certainly in the 12th century and would doubtless have been a prominent landmark to the early medieval peoples of northwest Essex.

Further investigation alone may enlighten us as to what meaning the Rumbergh and its neighbouring Quamstowe had to the people of the first millennium in northwest Essex or indeed what use they may have been put to? Whatever the answer, *Quamstow Slap* or *Constans Slap* has passed into folklore. A small patch of land alongside a lonely Roman road crossing the uplands of northwest Essex remains alive in the popular imagination well into the 21st century.

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ERO D/DJg Q1/1 – Deeds

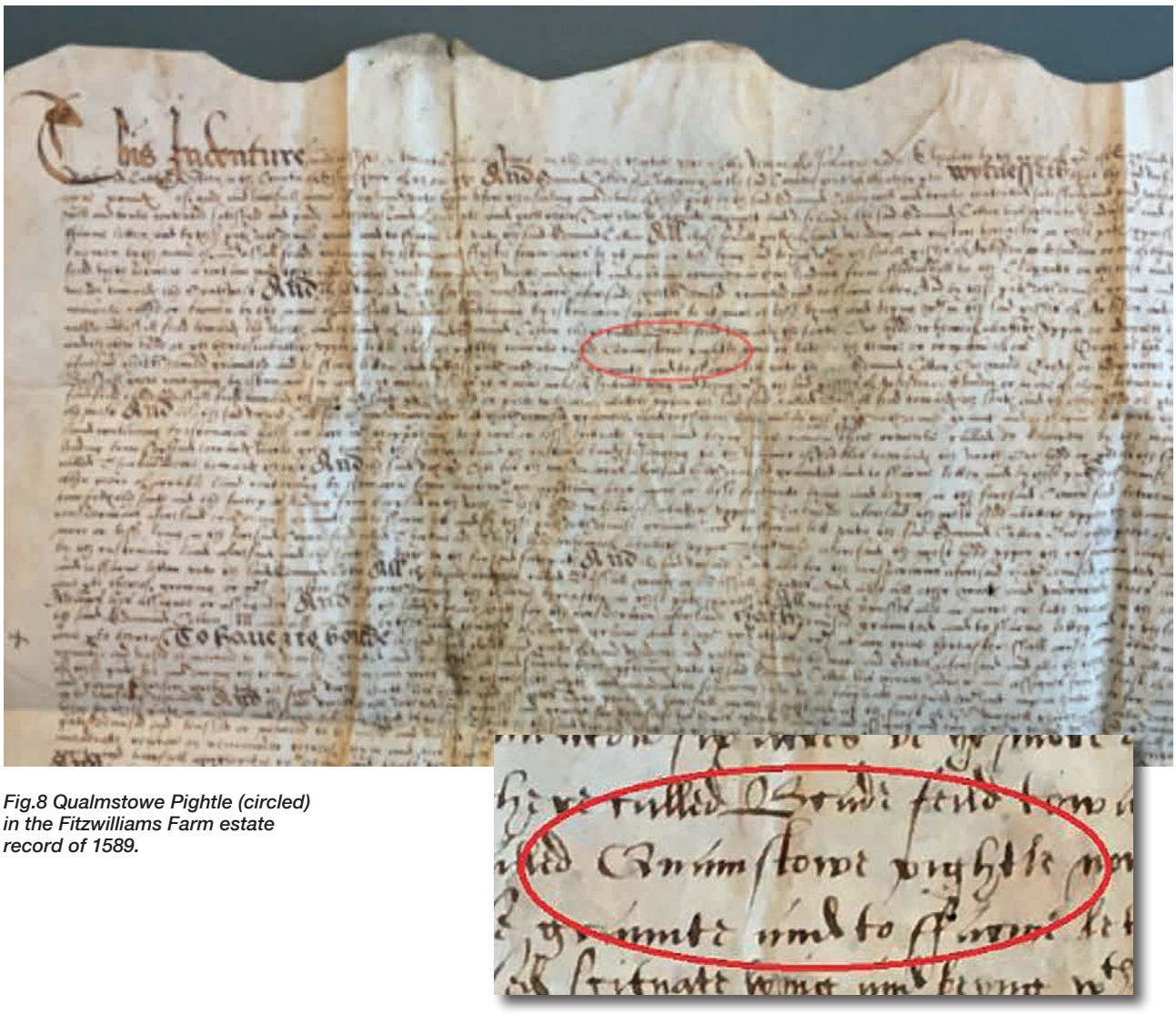

Fig.8 Qualmstowe Pightle (circled) in the Fitzwilliams Farm estate record of 1589.

The Old Rayleigh Rectory

Thomas Millham

The Old Rectory at the north end of Rayleigh High Street was redeveloped in the 1960s. Here we can see glimpses of the site's history from the Civil War to the Victorian era and the mid-20th century.

Plate 1. Rayleigh Rectory, 1967 © Rayleigh Town Museum

When the old Rayleigh rectory was demolished in 1967, this was the end of a building which had existed for around 350 years and which, as the demolition brought to light, was itself built upon the foundations of a much earlier structure.

The history of the rectory begins during the English Civil Wars (1642-1651) and the Restoration period (1660-*c.*1685), religious turbulence impacted the small Rayleigh rectory. Abraham Caley, minister at Rayleigh since 1643, was a Puritan after the model of Oliver Cromwell, who engendered an expansion of rigorous Puritanism on taking power as Lord Protector in 1651. Following Cromwell's death, the general unpopularity of austere Puritanism contributed to the Restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660 under Charles II, who vowed to fortify Anglicanism. Subsequently, an Act of Uniformity was directed towards the Puritan clergy in 1662 requiring them to take an oath of non-resistance to the Anglican Church. Caley decided to leave the rectory on grounds of conscience and was replaced by Samuel Bull the same year. Two centuries later in 1846, during roof repairs at the rectory, Cromwellian-period armour was discovered hidden in a chimney. However, the armour's subsequent disappearance means that we will probably never know why it was hidden or by whom.

Before the demolition of the old rectory, a sketch entitled 'View of the Church and Rectory 1841' hung on the wall of the entrance hall granting a glimpse into 19th Century Rayleigh. The sketch reveals that the old rectory and its serene front garden was positioned in what is now the church's private car park. A process of expansion took place throughout the 19th century under Rev. Twyne, with many rooms added and much land acquired, useful for holding community events such as the National School Fête of August 1868. A photograph of 1886 taken by Rev. MacVicar illustrates the extent of the expansion from a later date. A comparison with the 1841 sketch highlights the extensive additions to the building, which grew from a quaint, small-town rectory into a site reflecting an increasingly busy, motorised, interconnected world, epitomised by the arrival of the railway in 1889.

In 1931, the then rector, Rev. A. C. Sowter, utilised rectory land via a fundraising fête for church window repairs. The magazine advertisement for this read 'Don't forget to bring your purse to the Fête! We will do our very best to empty it for you'. Such events contributed to social cohesion, with a 'Ladies Working Party' meeting at the rectory during the build up to create items for sale. When the Second World War began in 1939, the parish room was commandeered by the War Office as a recreation room for servicemen.

Rayleigh Rectory, 1967 © Rayleigh Town Museum

In response, Rev. Sowter kindly allowed greater use of the rectory for meetings and events. Rayleigh's social life had to continue despite uncertainty, with groups such as the Girl's Study Circle meeting at the rectory 'in spite of evacuation and war work sadly depleting our numbers'. The 'Ladies Working Party' supplemented their Monday meetings with a Friday afternoon 'War Comforts Party'.

Despite attempts to renovate the rectory via loans after the war, by the end of the 1950s it was clear that the church could not reasonably afford to sustain the old structure. In 1967, proposals for a new building passed all necessary stages, some rectory land had been sold to fund the project and the old building was vacated ready for demolition. Many in the town were saddened by the prospect of losing the old rectory, none more so than the rector, Rev. Hatch, who mourned the loss of 'old Rayleigh', labelling the decision an 'unhappy necessity'. The rector stated his intention to provide a 'worthy successor to the old house' and construction began on 23rd December 1967.

Today, the new rectory is occupied by Rev. David Oxtoby. Unfortunately, little of the dilapidated old building was preserved, however, two wooden engravings representing the two faces of Roman god Janus were taken from a ruinous beam in the hall which, according to Rev. Ida Lawrence, was 'only held together by the woodworms holding hands'. The first month of the year was named after Janus, who looked both ways at once, as during this time one looks forward to the year ahead and back to the year just gone.

Such a souvenir must have seemed apt during the 1960s demolition and construction, but it also resonates now as we look back onto the history of the old rectory, but also forward to the service which the new one will no doubt continue to provide to the Rayleigh community for many years to come.

Sources:

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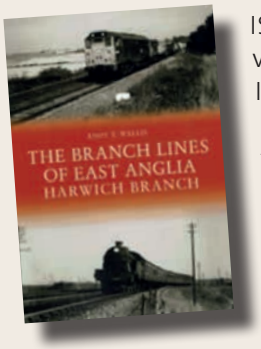
The town of Rayleigh owes its economic importance to the construction of a timber stronghold by the Norman Sweyn Fitzwymarc.

The name first appears in the Doomsday Book as *Rageneia* and *Ragheliam* (1086 AD), a Norman attempt to capture the English name *rægan leah* 'woodland clearing for a she-goat'. Subsequent medieval spellings include *Raelega, Ralea, Rielie* and *Roleg*. A document of 1337 spells it *Rayley* in line with modern pronunciation... but it later appears as *Redlegh, Roylegh* and *Rawley*. The same name appears as *Raleigh* near Pilton Devon, from which the famous seaman Sir Walter took his surname.

Book Reviews

Andy T Wallis

The Branch Lines of East Anglia – Harwich Branch



ISBN 978 1 4456 9526 6 print version (softbound) pp. 128
ISBN 978 1 4456 9527 3 ebook

Amberley Publishing, 2020, SWHS, £14.99 (print version or ebook)

This is the latest of the railway books from this author published by the prolific Amberley Publishing. This review is of the print version; an electronic version is available at the same price.

The line from Manningtree, to Parkeston Quay and Harwich may technically be a branch, in that it comes off another line, but it scarcely meets the popular image of one. It was opened in 1854, less than decade after the Colchester-Ipswich line off which it branches and was double tracked by 1882. Right from the start it has been a link in an important passenger route from London to Northern Europe, although freight traffic has greatly declined in recent years,

Although its title does not make this clear, this book is not a history of the line, but a collection of photographs. The main text consists of an introduction and a very brief history, with a simple map – four pages in all. The rest comprises 228 photographs, all black and white, and mainly two to a page in landscape format. The captions to each are rarely more than two to three lines.

The arrangement is to group the photographs by station, from west to east, starting at Manningtree and ending at Harwich Town. Most of the shots show trains. Comparatively few have station buildings as their main subject. There are no layout plans of the individual stations.

By this reviewer's count only three photographs date from earlier than 1947, and most are later than that. Therefore, the first century of the line is barely covered, except in so far as earlier buildings and infrastructure are shown in later images. There are some shots taken within the last few years, but, unlike other works by this author, there is no systematic attempt contrast the line as it is at this moment in time with its appearance in earlier years

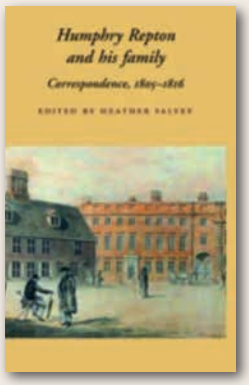
All the photographs are black and white, although it is to be presumed that some of the more recent ones would have been taken originally on colour film or with digital cameras. The great majority of the images are described as "ATW" collection, presumably referring to the author. How many of them were actually taken by him is not revealed. Some are from other sources. Sometimes a personal name is given. Many of the most recent infrastructure pictures, for instance, are ascribed to Ray Bishop. However, it is never stated in as many words whether in any particular case these named individuals are the actual photographers, or merely the suppliers of copies. This is important, as the ownership and duration of copyright in a photograph depends on the identity, and date of death, of the photographer.

In short, this is a book for the specialist railway historian or railway modeller, or perhaps for someone who knows the present line well and wishes to see what it looked like in the comparatively recent past. How much they would find that is new is beyond this reviewer's knowledge.

Neil Wiffen

H. Falvey (editor)

Humphry Repton and his family: Correspondence, 1805-1816



pp.411, ISBN
978-0-9957736-3-9

Norfolk Record Society volume LXXXIV, 2020

Price: £25

Transcripts of about 230 letters between members of the Repton family form the latest publication of the Norfolk Record Society. The letters are now the Huntington Library in the USA, having been purchased at auction in Sotheby's in 1974, so there are obvious benefits in having them easily available to researchers on this side of the Atlantic. Most, or all, were originally collected by Repton's fourth son, William, a solicitor in the Norfolk town of Aylsham. They are warm, humorous and intimate communications, reflecting the close ties that existed between the various members of the extended family, and they reflect their interests in, and concerns with, the outside world. Those looking for revelations about Repton's profession as a landscape designer may be disappointed, though there is some indication of additional work done at Auberies in Bulmer, Essex, as well as at a few sites in other counties. Nevertheless the letters reveal the more intimate aspects of his professional life, particularly the support that he received from his extended family in making the famous Red Books to illustrate his proposals to clients, and their companionship on his long journeys

round the country to provide plans and advice. This assistance was particularly important after he had been left permanently disabled by a coach accident, incurred when returning on snow-bound roads from a ball at Belhus in January 1811. The letters show his human side too, with worries about money, his shortage of commissions, and his concern that he would become a burden to his family.

This publication is an exemplary piece of editing, and its detail and clarity bely the considerable amount of research behind the extensive footnotes which provide information about people and events mentioned in the letters. The transcripts themselves have been carefully set out in chronological order (unlike their ordering in the Huntington Library) and include important incidental details such as postmarks, and subsequent endorsements by the recipients or others.

The introduction explains the editorial process with commendable clarity, and provides a useful resumé of Repton's life, and the members of his extended family. The reader will acquire considerable sympathy for Repton himself who had a very chequered career. Apprenticed to a Norwich textile merchant, he was then set up in business by his father, but quickly failed and lost most of his capital. In 1784 he invested what was left in a venture, set up by the Post Office pioneer, John Palmer, to replace the existing slow and insecure horse post with fast, light, regularly timetabled, mail coaches. Though this was to become a huge success, Palmer was dismissed and spent many years seeking financial redress. Repton, of course, lost the last of his capital. It was not till 1788, at the age of 36, that he started a new career as a landscape gardener from his new home at Hare Street, Romford. Though this career was to be a great success, and he became hugely influential nationally, one is left with the sense that he was yet again let down by his lack of business sense, and that financial insecurity pursued him to the end of his life.

This book will be of considerable interest to Essex readers for the insight it gives into the personal life of someone so closely associated with the county. It also provides an intimate picture of a close family network, its concerns and the incidentals of daily life in the early nineteenth century. And as a careful and thorough piece of editing, it is a triumph.

Neil Wiffen

Andrew Phillips

Colchester: A History

134 pp, card covers, monochrome photographs, maps, figures

ISBN 978 0 7509 8691 5
Phillimore & Co., 2017

£10.99

This is a fine example of a local history book which covers all the necessary key facts relating to the town in a concise yet very readable manner. All the must-have elements are here: the Roman garrison, the Boudican revolt, the Norman castle, the mediaeval merchants and the cloth trade, the rise of Puritanism and its effects, the Civil War siege, preparations for war with the French, the coming of the railways. Of course Colchester has a longer recorded history than any other site in Britain, so the treatment of any single era is necessarily brief but nevertheless the author manages to convey all the salient facts in a lively and informative manner. As the narrative approaches the later 20th century, coverage is more intensive and it occasionally takes on the feel of a personal memoir.

The text is divided into chapters covering blocks of centuries, with individual topics treated in sub-sections. It is a revised version of the first edition published in 2004. The layout is clear and uncluttered with generous use of margins and 144 illustrations. Many are monochrome photographs, alongside line-drawings and period maps.

The prose style is factual yet engaging, offering a useful discussion of the major topics without descending into an excess of confusing detail. Some 'shorthand' terms are used (e.g. 'Dark Ages') for convenience, but this does not detract from the overall flow of the text. No major event is omitted, even the often-overlooked fact that King Athelstan's re-conquest of the Danelaw was launched from Colchester in 931 after a full meeting of the Witan attended by a vast number or earls, ealdormen, abbots, bishops and the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is no easy matter to include the great and the everyday side-by-side in a single text and Dr. Phillips is to be congratulated on his success.

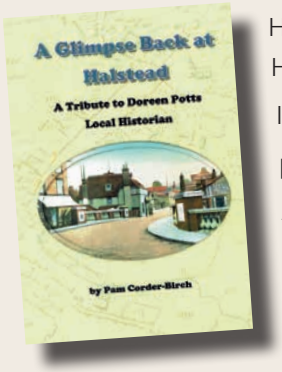
While no work of this length can hope to cover everything of interest, this book provides a useful and very readable summary of its subject within the context of national history. It would certainly form a good basis for further study.

The only small disappointment with the book is the 'Concise Bibliography' which runs to just twenty-six titles. While space is always at a premium in printed works, one of the great benefits of a useful introductory book such as this is the opportunity for the author to guide readers in their research interests. That said, the inclusion of academic series such as *Colchester Archaeologist* and *Essex Archaeology and History* does promote study of the more technical side of historical research while the local newspaper references will offer a broader view. In all, the book is an excellent overview of Colchester's history.

Steve Pollington

Pam Corder-Birch

A Glimpse Back at Halstead: a tribute to Doreen Potts, local historian



Halstead & District Local History Society, 2020

ISBN 978-0-9934015-1-0

pp.136. £12.95

Available from the HDLHS website: halsteadhistory.org.uk/publications

Halstead is fortunate to have a dynamic local history society with many active historians and a wide-ranging list of publications, of which this book is just the latest. Dedicated to Doreen Potts it is a celebration not only of her but also the town in which she was born and loved so much. Written by Halstead resident and historian Pam Corder-Birch, it is a fitting tribute to the place and person.

This books covers all aspects of the last 150 or so years of the history of Halstead from the farms surrounding the town, the grand house, local industries and modes of transport along with many of the leading families such as the Blamsters, Blomfields and Vaizeys. Profusely illustrated with an excellent selection of first-class images, superbly and clearly reproduced, with captions and many extended sections of text, this is a very nicely balanced publication which is evidently underpinned by the thorough and extensive knowledge of the author.

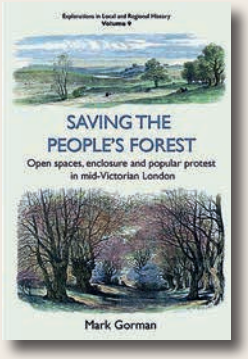
There are many to choose from, but three illustrations particularly appealed to this reviewer. Firstly that from 1904 of 'Lord' Sanger's Circus parading down the High Street (p.11) in which at least 3 elephants can be seen – what a spectacle that must have made to residents at the time and I wonder if my grandfather Redvers, then aged three, was watching? From the 1950s the illustration of the Aveling & Porter road roller (p.77) being used by Essex County Council is fascinating. To see steam powered vehicles still in use that late is most interesting. Indeed, in the background is a much more modern looking caterpillar bulldozer. Finally, accompanying the section about the 1957 bus strike, the illustration of workers climbing into the back of a transport lorry (p.82) must be unique – thankfully someone decided to take it.

A bibliography and source list along with a good index finish off this very nicely produced and reasonable priced book. I'm sure locals, as well as those of us with Halstead ancestry, will enjoy it and find it useful and informative now and, more importantly, in years to come. Oh, and look out for a young and bearded Adrian Corder-Birch in one of the more recent photographs!

Neil Wiffen

Mark Gorman

Saving The People's Forest



Open spaces, enclosure and popular protest in mid-Victorian London, 166 pp, card covers, maps, monochrome illustrations

ISBN978-1-912260-41-6

University of Hertfordshire Press, 2021

Mark Gorman has been researching the subject of Victorian popular protest movements for more than a decade, and applies his broad knowledge to the topic of open spaces and their access which had already become a thorny political issue by the mid-century. Encroaching urbanisation associated with the rise of London as the supreme commercial centre came face-to-face with the increased awareness of the potential for (largely) peaceful public agitation in shaping government policy. Organisations such as the Reform League and the Chartists often combined their resources in pursuit of common aims including changes to the electoral system, and their public demonstrations were launched from public open spaces such as Primrose Hill, which was already firmly associated with meeting the recreational needs of working-class Londoners.

Recreation was not always the first concern of the inhabitants of East London's slums, on whose borders Epping Forest served as a natural barrier to expansion until 1830 when a major road was punched through to the town of Epping. Railway expansion east to Romford followed, which was then on the southern extremity of the Forest. Commerce and leisure motivated the expansion at first, followed quickly by dense settlement in what had previously been a secluded rural environment. The woodland character of Epping Forest was soon changed as timber was felled and removed for first agriculture and later housing. By the early 1860s the villages of south-west Essex were engulfed by the metropolis, served by railways and a road network; Wanstead Flats, an old heathland forming part of the Forest of Essex, was covered with housing and the outlying villages subsumed into the urban landscape.

Campaigning to preserve the remaining open spaces as a resource available to all was championed by middle-

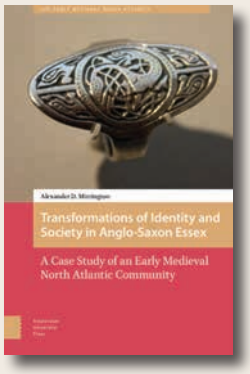
class urban capitalists who took the fight to the law courts and on to Parliament. But grass-roots popular protest played a much larger part in the process, argues, Gorman, taking the example of Epping Forest as a case-study for the movement as a whole. The opposing sides in the disagreement – perhaps misleadingly characterised as landowners versus artisans – were inspired in part by ideological concerns. The right of freeborn English men to work the land without hindrance, the popular movement claimed, had been under severe pressure since the Norman Conquest when the plundering of the country's resources was undertaken at will by the (Norman) aristocracy. The battle-lines were drawn, the Norman Yoke was to be resisted at all costs, the spirits of Wat Tyler and Robin Hood were invoked to express the working man's rights. Reform was eventually achieved, enclosure came to be classed as dispossession and popular feeling against destruction of the remainder of the Forest mobilised large-scale protests which resulted in the passing of the Epping Forest Act in 1878 which imposed legal preservation of the Forest for public enjoyment. The cultured public champions of the cause were feted – largely ignoring the role of large-scale popular mobilisation had played.

This book is the ninth in the series Explorations in Local and Regional History, which seeks to offer new analysis of sources for local history as well as broadening research and innovating methodologies. The intended readership is not solely academic but encompasses the many local history groups and independent scholars who enrich the study of the subject with their often highly detailed observations. The present book fits neatly into the remit, being a well-researched study of a topic (the effects of the Enclosures Act) which has resonances widely in local history. A comprehensive bibliography and index as well as a listing of primary published and unpublished sources offer the reader everything necessary to continue in researching and developing the subject.

Steve Pollington

Alexander D. Mirrington

Transformations of Identity and Society in Anglo-Saxon Essex. A Case Study of an Early Medieval North Atlantic Community



300 pp, hardback, monochrome maps

ISBN 978-94-6298-034-1. Amsterdam University Press, 2019. £90

The subject of Essex in the Anglo-Saxon period has not often received detailed treatment even in the academic world, much less in the popular market. Caught between the twin dazzling centres of Christian Kent and determinedly non-Christian East Anglia, the land of the East Saxons has seldom been thought worthy of a special volume – and that despite the world-class discovery at Prittlewell. Does the present work fill the void?

It should first be said that an archaeology-based approach to Anglo-Saxon Essex on this scale has not previously been attempted. Compilations of documentary sources for the period are not prolific: Cyril Hart produced a slim but very useful volume of 'The Early Charters of Essex' in 1971, which is largely a bald listing of the documents with notes on their content and authenticity. Pewsey and Brooks published 'East Saxon Heritage: An Essex Gazetteer' in 1993 with a listing of architectural survivals outlining their significance and notes on where and how to find them. But the archaeology of the county, while not ignored, has not previously been foregrounded in any work published by a major institution, and the few specialist woks have tended to focus on e.g. grave-goods distribution within a single site, or the large-scale excavations at Mucking. J.T. Baker's 2006 in-depth work on the Chilterns region (Cultural Transition in the Chilterns and Essex Region, 350-650 AD) incorporates a partial discussion of Essex and his conclusions may be relevant more widely. Survival of 'British' communities into the post-Roman world is suggested for the Chilterns as a whole, based partly on the evidence of archaeology and toponymy with a focus on Verulamium, but the proof is never solid and Baker's work ceases at the very point where written records commence. In the present work Mirrington aims to give greater depth to the study through a fresh analysis of the archaeological record.

The contents page immediately impresses: an initial introduction sets out the topography and research aims; the first chapter covers 400-650 AD through items of costume, contrasting 'Saxon', 'Anglian' and 'Kentish/Frankish' styles, coinage, pottery and exchange systems; the second moves into the 'Middle Saxon' period , 650-800, with the same range of topics, but greater emphasis on the numismatic evidence and a useful regional guide to probable 'sites of exchange' such as Tilbury, Barking, Bradwell, Fingringhoe and Harwich; the third covers 850-1066, with less focus on regional fashions and greater emphasis on the local and regional ceramics available at this time, the impact of Viking activity and role of urban development. A summary combines the results of the previous studies into a dozen pages outlining the major trends and

developments. There are 18 graphs showing mainly coinage data, and 44 maps relating to dress accessories, ceramics and other subjects.

The research formed part of the author's 2013 doctoral thesis but in its preparation for publication it has been saved from the worst excesses of technical jargon. That said, it does betray its academic origins: it will help if the reader knows what is meant by a 'peplos' dress or 'Thetford Ware' pottery since such terms are not explained in any detail and the index does not include them.

There is inevitably a certain amount of theorizing in the text following current intellectual fashions but this does not in any way detract from the usefulness of the discussions, which are even-handed and well presented.

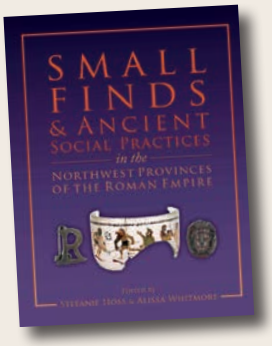
It would certainly have been useful if the book had included some photographs or other illustrations to remind the reader of important details such as the difference between small-long and supporting-arm type brooches, and the various designs of coins referred to in the text. The cover sports a colour photo of a finger ring recovered from the River Thames with an elliptoid bezel and Trewhiddle Style ornament – but disappointingly I could find no reference to this in the text.

In all, the book is a useful addition to the library of any student of Essex history, regional archaeology or the Anglo-Saxon period. Indeed, it is in many respects indispensable at present, providing an overview of the full range of archaeological evidence for Essex in the Anglo-Saxon period and a set of inferences drawn from them. As a snap-shot of the state of present knowledge it is without any serious competition – and is likely to remain so. Doubtless there will be more to say about the chamber-tomb at Prittlewell and its contents, and maybe another significant find will again overturn our thinking, but no serious student of the county or the period should be without this book.

Steve Pollington

Stefanie Hoss & Alissa Whitmore (eds.)

Small Finds and Ancient Social Practices in the Northwest Provinces of the Roman Empire



173 pp, card covers, monochrome photographs, maps, graphs

ISBN 978-1-78570-256-3

Oxbow Books, 2016

The subject of 'small finds' in sometimes contentious in archaeological circles, since many of these objects lack any true stratigraphical context: lying in the topsoil where they are subject to the rigours of hot and cold weather, the action of the plough and harrow and the attack of agricultural chemicals, many small finds are overlooked or irreparably damaged before they are recovered by field-walkers, sharp-eyed farmworkers, metal-detector users and casual passers by.

'Small finds' are usually everyday objects which were made, owned and used by the bulk of the populace in days gone by: clay pipes, jettons, shoe buckles, pipe tampers, musket balls, strap-ends and a myriad of other such material are found regularly in fields, paths, riverbanks and elsewhere. The subject of this book concentrates on those finds which can be dated to the Roman period, and which have some relation to human life within a social context which might include religion, fashions in costume or military equipment, access to the supernatural at times of stress.

The work comprises twelve separate essays dealing with the finds themselves and what they can teach us about the social contexts in which they were used. Boris Burandt discusses the patterns developed when hobnails were fixed to the soles of military footwear of the 1st-3rd c. in Britain and Germania (both provinces). Rather than randomly covering the sole with studs, the craftsmen often applied them in distinct patterns which often involved a border enclosing a median row of studs, a ring, or a vesica pattern; the more ambitious examples included S-scrolls and gammadion patterns. The forms of the boots, shoes and sandals and their lacings are presented according to the standard typology. Just the impression of a nailed sole can provide enough information to reveal the form of footwear which created it. Sandals feature again in Barbara Köstner's treatment of the Roman fashion for wearing woollen socks beneath them. Indeed sewn stockings with an added foot have been recovered from Clermont-Ferrand, while a funerary stele from Neumagen shows a thick sock with a separate pocket for the big toe to facilitate wearing sandals with a toe-strap. The technique used to create these socks is now known as 'nålbinding' and appears to have remained popular into the early medieval period. Warm feet were as important to men, women and children in Roman Britain as they are today.

The topic of make-up is covered by Gisela Michel, specifically the ingredients used and the methods of application, using archaeological and written evidence. The use of cosmetics such as kohl, rouge, foundation and eye-shadow is mentioned by several Roman writers in connection with high-status women wishing to follow the current fashions of the day in emphasising their eyes or lips. Physical evidence is supplied by the tall, narrow-necked glass unguentaria which are found in graves of many periods. While brooches have usually been considered a female dress item, Stefanie

Hoss discusses the class of plate brooches which appear from the 2nd century and which appear to have formed part of military costume used to secure a cape and the more substantial bow brooches with a deep curved central section which could accommodate the thick woollen *sagum* or military cloak. While funerary and other monuments show mainly rosette and disc brooches, the actual finds recovered from military sites display a variety of forms including animals, body parts, swastikas and other geometric shapes. By the later 3rd century the ubiquitous crossbow brooch had entered service as an emphatic marker of military status.

Mara Vejby looks at the potential transformation of mundane objects when they are placed in religiously significant locations – whether this might be coins deposited as votive offerings, fragments of ceramic, hobnails and other similar small pieces. 'Votive' finds' are associated with 'ritual contexts' but modern ideas of such contexts (temples, shrines, burials) need not correspond closely to the types of place chosen in the Roman period. For example, in Armorica megalithic tombs routinely contain Roman-period items such as pottery and coins but also sometimes small statues and religious figures. Nicole Birkle examines the techniques used to produce a class of religious icons, specifically sheet metal plaques with repoussé depictions of gods such as Mars or Mercury, and discovers that the images were sometimes created using a group of moulds for individual body parts. This occasionally results in peculiar mismatches whereby the warrior-god Mars appears with prominent breasts and a dress. Metal figures appear again in Emma Durham's paper on the bronze religious figurines from London and Colchester, some of which were probably made locally, which feature eastern deities such as Cybele or Isis. The deposition pattern for Colchester is consistent with the norm for Roman Britain as a whole, while the evidence from London is more varied. The figure of Rosmerta from Colchester is a reminder that the local deities did not vanish entirely with the arrival of Hercules and Jupiter.

Religious imagery of another type is covered by Adam Parker in his examination of *gorgoneia* from Chelmsford, Colchester, London and elsewhere, all carved in jet. These female gorgon-heads are understood to have had an apotropaic function and their popularity with the military does suggest that they were considered useful in averting avoidable dangers. The electrostatic properties of jet were associated with healing while its qualities as a carving material recommended it for such small amulets. Ines Klenner reviews the ceramic evidence for the cult of Mithras, specifically the taking of a meal as part of the ritual celebration of the god. Analysis of the sherds recovered from one site (Güglingen) indicates that consumption of drink played a greater part in proceedings than the serving of food.

Alissa Whitmore discusses the finds of needles, loom weights and spindle whorls from bath houses and proposes that their presence is due to low-level textile production in those structures where the access to clean water and other products may have been especially helpful to low-class workers, bathers and attendants. Andrew Birley takes evidence from Vindolanda to review the relationships between *vicus* and fort. Perhaps not surprisingly, the civilian *vicus* yielded as much military material as the fort did, especially in the area of baths and taverns where casual losses might be more common. Despite the image of the Roman military machine as disciplined and rigid, the Vindolanda material shows that human frailties have always prevailed.

The book is an excellent compilation of essays which shed new light on aspects of everyday life in Roman towns – Colchester and London especially – and will stimulate much further research.

Steve Pollington

Your Book Reviewers are: Steve Pollington, Editor and Neil Wiffen.

Twenty Questions

Stephen Pollington

Stephen Pollington has taken over the role of EJ editor from Neil Wiffen. He is an author with more than a dozen books to his name dealing with aspects of the history of Britain in the Anglo-Saxon period on a range of topics including the meadhall culture of the aristocracy, the medical tradition, weapons and warfare, pre-Christian religion, art and material culture.

Born in Rochford in 1957, he grew up in Thundersley and has lived in Southchurch, Thorpe Bay, Basildon and now Boxted. Due to family illness he did not pursue an academic career, but has nevertheless formally studied archaeology and linguistics. He has lectured widely in the UK, Europe and USA on historical topics as well as appearing in several television programmes and providing voice-over for others.

Stephen teaches Old English part-time through CityLit and Wuffing Education.

1. **What is your favourite historical period?**

   The Anglo-Saxon period, 5th to 11th century – when the foundations of our linguistic, toponymic, social and legal structures were set down. It is distant enough in time to repay studying in detail as a historical period, but at the same time it remains very familiar in many ways.

2. **Tell us what Essex means to you**

   The 'land of the East Saxons', so an area with strong links to other parts of northern Europe but retaining a character and flavour all its own. The part of England where I was born and grew up. Coastal paths, steep hills and extensive marshes, ancient woodland, strange old places with strange old names…

3. **What historical mystery would you most like to know?**

   The identities of the nobles laid to rest in the burial chambers at Prittlewell, Broomfield and Sutton Hoo Mound 1. Did they know each other – I think they may well have being near-contemporary rulers of neighbouring territories – and what inspired them towards the political and religious choices they made on behalf of their peoples?

4. **My favourite history book is …**

   Always changing. At the moment it is Leonard Neidorf's The Dating of Beowulf. Michael Wood's In Search of the Dark Ages is one I come back to from time to time, as well as archaeological and linguistic studies.

5. **What is your favourite place in Essex?**

   There are many – childhood memories of Hadleigh Castle, Thundersley Common and Westcliff-on-Sea, more recent ones of Colchester Museum and the Dedham Vale AONB.

6. **How do you relax?**

   I don't relax much – as a wise man once said: 'I find relaxing rather stressful'.

7. **What are you researching at the moment?**

   The social implications of religious conversion in the 7th century. The nature of 'native' religion and the competing forms of Christianity it had to strive against, alongside the destructive effect of literacy on oral traditions – and the paradoxical fact that without such literacy we would know even less of those societies than we now do.

8. **My earliest memory is…**

   Playing with cousins in the meadow beside my grandparents' house near Pitsea church.

9. **What is your favourite song/piece of music and why?**

   Probably I Vow to Thee My Country because its stately melody evokes in me strong feelings of warmth and belonging. But Holst, Greig, Wagner and Elgar are also in the mix.

10. **If you could travel back in time which event would you change?**

    14th October 1066. If I could turn up on Senlac Hill alongside King Harold with an assault rifle and a few rounds of ammo, subsequent events would play out rather differently…

11. **Which four people from the past would you invite to dinner?**

    King Alfred the Great, JRR Tolkien, Edmund Ironside and King Theoderic of the Ostrogoths. That group would make for a lively conversation about the nature of kingship and the role of tradition in creating identity.

12. **What is your favourite food?**

    A roast dinner with plenty of thick gravy.

13. **The history book I am currently reading is**

    Andrew Breeze's British Battles 493-937 Mount Badon to Brunanburh. My unread bookpile resists my best efforts to reduce it, and during 'lockdown' it has grown higher than usual.

14. **What is your favourite quote from history?**

    I don't think you can beat the words of Byrhthelm at Maldon in 991 for pure courage: "Thought shall be the harder, heart the keener, courage the greater as our strength dwindles!" The warrior ethos of a thousand years is summed up in those two verse lines.

15. **Favourite historical film?**

    I've never seen a historical film that didn't irritate me to some extent. I suppose Master & Commander:The Far Side of the World has a lot going for it, mainly because I have no detailed knowledge of the period and can enjoy it for what it is.

16. **What is your favourite building in Essex?**

    The world's oldest wooden church at Greenstead, near Chipping Ongar.

17. **What past event would you like to have seen?**

    King Alfred's taking of the Danish fort at Benfleet, and the subsequent peace negotiations.

18. **How would you like to be remembered?**

    Fondly, I suppose, as someone who tried to share his love of history with as many people as possible.

19. **Who inspires you to read or write or research history?**

    Several people I have known personally – Sam Newton, Michael Wood, Kathleen Herbert, Christopher Wren (not that one!) – and many others who were gone before I arrived.

20. **Most memorable historical date?**

    As an Anglo-Saxonist, I am obliged to say 14th October 1066 or forever hang my head in shame.

Stan Newens, 1930-2021

Arthur Stanley Newens

Local historian of Essex and East London
4 February 1930 – 2 March 2021

Our friend Stan, who has passed away aged 91, was a great supporter of the *Essex Journal (EJ)* in general, and of me as Honorary Editor in particular. As outlined by our former Chairman of the Editorial Board, Adrian Corder-Birch, in the Spring 2020 issue, Stan joined the Board in 2006 when the future of the publication was in doubt. A dwindling subscriber base and increasing printing costs looked likely to finish it off after 40 years or so. Along with Adrian, Martin Stuchfield, Maureen Scollan, Dorothy Lockwood, Geraldine Willden, Richard Morris and the late Marie Wolfe, Stan joined an enlarged Editorial Board with a view to securing the future of the *EJ* and I joined as the new Honorary Editor for the autumn issue of volume 42 in 2007 following the sad death of my predecessor, Michael Beale, earlier that year.

Stan was incredibly supportive right from the beginning and I grew used to him standing up in meetings proffering *EJ* membership leaflets and encouraging non-subscribers to subscribe (he was always incredulous that many didn't subscribe) as well as telling all assembled what a good job I was doing, much to my embarrassment. Having Stan to hand was always very reassuring not only as he was such a good committee man, but that he also knew everyone who was anyone in the Essex local history scene and his memory went way back. So far back in fact that in a 2007 Essex Record Office (ERO) competition to find the researcher who had used it the longest, Stan won having first visited in August 1948.

And along with Stan's solid guidance and support he could still surprise. In one of our meetings the ERO's then Outreach and Engagement Officer, the late Debbie Peers and I were talking about social media and web presence, when Stan piped up with 'Well of course, I've got a Wikipedia entry.' Debbie and I looked at each other, open mouthed, gobsmacked – 'really?' 'Well yes, although whoever created it has got me down incorrectly as a revolutionary communist when in fact it should a revolutionary socialist [or words to that effect]'. Stan was completely at one with this level of fame. Debbie and I just didn't know anyone who had a Wikipedia entry.

A special edition of *EJ* to marks Stan's 90th birthday was published last year (*EJ* 55.1) and all the contributors were so pleased to take part and it was a pleasure to mark Stan's contribution to the history of Essex. It was in regard to this that I last saw Stan when I dropped some extra copies off with him at the beginning of lockdown. Thinking I'd only be a few minutes at the door, I finally made it away after about 20 – there was always so much to talk to Stan about.

Stan, on behalf of all of the members of the EJ Editorial Board, thank you for your time and commitment and, most of all, your inspiration. It was an honour to have served with you and known you.

Neil Wiffen, EJ Hon Ed 2007-20

(A full-length obituary of Stan will appear in the ESAH *Transactions*.)

A Roman bronze figurine from Roxwell wearing the Birrus Britannicus – now in Chelmsford Museum, nearly lost to the art market and only saved by a change in the law. *See inside.*