

NEWSLETTER

WINTER • 2020



**The Essex Society
for Archaeology & History**

FORMERLY THE ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Contents

From the President.....	1
Welcome to our new Newsletter Editor.....	2
Essex Journal.....	2
We welcome as a new member.....	2
Society of Antiquaries of London.....	3
Servants in the smaller Essex monasteries in 1536.....	3
The buildings of Littley Park.....	6
Moses Wall of Braintree, English Civil War clergyman, secret agent and republican..	7
An embittered dispute in Great Waltham.....	9
The restoration of Easton Park.....	13
25 Years of The Gibberd Garden.....	15
New publications.....	17
Book reviews.....	17

Editor: Adrian Corder-Birch
Editor (future issues): Victoria Rathmill
Email: victoriarathmill@outlook.com
Assistant Editor: Michael Leach

Copy for the next issue should be sent to the editor at the above address by no later than 12th March 2021

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Society or its officers.

The illustration on the front cover is Frances Eveleyn “Daisy’ Greville, Countess of Warwick (1861-1938) who was born at Little Easton Lodge and inherited the estate at the age of four (see the article *The restoration of Easton Park* on pages 13-15).

Registered Charity no. 213218
ISSN 0305-8530



From the President

I hope you are all keeping well in this strange and difficult year. The pandemic disruption still continues, but although we were unable to hold our usual AGM, I am pleased to say that many members emailed or wrote to me, our Secretary or Membership Secretary, to endorse our annual report and accounts. These have been safely submitted to the Charity Commission. In a hopeful sign of a gradual return to something like normality, at least one of this year's programme of events went ahead, the walking tour of Colchester led by Jane Pearson. Furthermore, as you will see, this Newsletter has a programme of, mostly outdoor, events for the first half of 2021 and for the November symposium in the hope and expectation that conditions then will allow it to proceed in more or less the normal way.

Since our last Newsletter the Society's Council and Officers have been active on a number of fronts, and it is great to be able to report that, as you will see elsewhere in this Newsletter, progress has been made on finding new editors for both the *Essex Journal* and our Newsletter. As many of you will be aware although by no means perfect the way in which archaeology and other aspects of the historic environment are dealt with in the planning process has greatly improved over the last 30 years. In the Summer, the government issued a consultation on 'Planning for the Future' a white paper suggesting a major change to the planning system. The white paper says the nature of our current planning regime makes '...the English planning system and those derived from it an exception internationally...' and proposes replacing it with a system of zonal planning rather

like those used in the Netherlands and Germany. The scale of the changes and the compressed timetable for their implementation raise concerns about future provision for historic environment issues. The Society submitted a full response to the consultation raising these concerns and we will see what form any legislation may take next year.

In September I made a couple of excursions, early in the month I visited the Museum of London's Docklands site to see their exhibition on the Havering hoard (you will recall we had a report on that fascinating find in our Spring Newsletter). The museum has done a good job of making the venue as Covid secure as possible, and the exhibition is excellent. The hoard is fully displayed alongside other finds from the site and is well explained, both in the local context and as part of the wider Bronze Age world. The exhibition is open until 18th April 2021 and is well worth a visit if you can make it. I could not resist buying a Havering Hoard tote bag from the museum shop, and can now regularly be seen in Chelmsford High Street carrying a large bag decorated with drawings of fragments of Bronze Age metalwork from the hoard. We are fortunate that Sophia Adams of the University of Glasgow has agreed to give us a talk at our annual Symposium in 2021 (to be held on Saturday, 6th November); Sophia is an expert on Bronze Age metalwork and has been closely involved in the analysis and interpretation of the Havering Hoard and I look forward to hearing her talk. At the end of September, I walked up to Hadleigh castle, the ruins of that scheduled Monument looking dramatic against the sky, and with the usual commanding views across the estuary. Walking back as the tide went out, I eat



Hadleigh castle.
(photo: © Alamy)

lunch on Two Tree Island, and then walked along the old sea wall with a kingfisher darting across the borrow dyke, and looked across a fine stretch of saltmarsh, to the same wide expanse of the estuary, this time seen almost from water level and now bathed in sunlight, with flocks of Brent Geese and Dunlin gliding over the mudflats with Redshanks and Egrets feeding closer in. There was also a good view of another Scheduled Monument, surely one of our largest and most iconic – Southend Pier. Speaking of designated sites, during the Summer, both the Harlow Town Park and Beth Chatto Gardens have been added to Historic England's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. These two gardens, the one an integral part of a New Town the other created in a rural setting are a reminder of the remarkable diversity of our county's landscape.

Nigel Brown

Welcome to our new Newsletter Editor

I am delighted to report that Victoria Rathmill, B.A.(Hons), M.A., has been appointed as our new Newsletter Editor. In addition Victoria has agreed to be responsible for our Twitter account and social media generally. Her duties in the dual roles will commence in early January 2021 in good time for our forthcoming change to digital newsletters.

Victoria is Assistant Curator of Archaeology at Southend Museum and lives in Chelmsford. Will you please send future contributions for the Newsletter to Victoria at victoriarathmill@outlook.com. I should like to give a warm welcome to Victoria and wish her well in her new roles! May I take this opportunity to thank all members who have contributed articles to the Newsletter in the past and I am sure you will help and support Victoria in the future.

Adrian Corder-Birch

Essex Journal

I am also very pleased to report that Stephen Pollington has been appointed as the editor of *Essex Journal* in succession to Neil Wiffen. Steve is an authority and author on Anglo Saxon history. Please see *Essex Journal* for further information.

Adrian Corder-Birch

We welcome as a new member

Nigel Hill of Great Bardfield.



Society of Antiquaries of London

Our congratulations are offered to two members of the Society who have been elected as Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries of London. Dr. Andrea Kirkham of Norwich, who has been a member of ESAH since 2018 and is a specialist in the conservation of wall paintings was elected earlier this year.

In October, Tony Crosby was also elected. He is chairman of Essex industrial Archaeology Group and a member of the ESAH Council. For many years he has been actively involved with industrial archaeology including being the author of numerous publications and articles. Tony is a former chairman of the Association of Industrial Archaeology and is its representative on the All Party Parliamentary Group on industrial heritage.

Adrian Corder-Birch

Servants in the smaller Essex monasteries in 1536

As the result of the Act of Suppression of 1536, the small monasteries, those with an annual value of less than £200, were closed. Groups of commissioners were sent round to make inventories of all the movable goods, which were then sold on-site. The commissioners were also instructed to record:

'What number of persons in religion be in the same and the conversation of their lives, and how many of them be priests, and how many of them will go to other

houses of that religion, or how many will take capacities, and how many servants... the same house keepeth commonly, and what other persons have their living in the same house.'

The answers to all these questions, and other details, were written down and formed the original returns to the Court of Augmentations. For Essex the original 1536 returns have survived only patchily, that for Hatfield Regis (Broad Oak) being apparently one of the few to have survived in its complete form, the original bundle of papers now bound into a single volume labelled 'Papers relating to the Priory of Hatfield Reg. at the time of the Dissolution.' These returns, and those from the other monasteries suppressed in 1536, were summarised in the Receivers' Accounts, which survive in full; these summaries are quite frequently the only record of, for example, the numbers of servants, to have survived.

At Hatfield Regis the prior, Richard Stondon, told 'Sir John Seyntclere' and the other Commissioners, on 19th June (1536), that there were, apart from himself, 4 monks present in his house, together with 20 servants, of whom 9 were 'weytyng servants'. There follows in the document a list of names (presumably the servants), each of whom was due back pay, including Stephen Story, organ player, John Everingham, 'butteler' (a waiting servant), John Machin, brewer, Bartholomew Slipper, one of the priory's farmers, Robert Cosford, undercook, John Warde, the barber, and Maude, the 'dayewife'. The 'waiting servants' would have been liveried, Thomas Chaundellor of Stortford being owed 30s. for the price of woollen cloth

Monastery	Religious 1534-6 ¹	Religious 1536²	Servants 1536³	Novices ('pueri')	Religious 1536 ⁴
Hatfield Regis (Benedictine)	Prior + 9 monks ⁵	Prior + 4 monks	17		10
Colne (Benedictine)	Prior + 10 monks ⁶	Prior + 7 monks	20		11
Tilty (Cistercian)	Abbot + 5 monks ⁷	Abbot + 5 monks	13 + 3 corrodians		6
Prittlewell (Cluniac)	7 monk ⁸	4 monks	24	8	?
Berden (Augustinian)		Prior + 3 canons	4		1
Leighs (Leez, Augustinian)	Prior + 10 canons ⁹	9 canons	8		11
Thremhall (Augustinian)		Prior + 3 canons	8		4?

¹ The blanks in this column indicate that there are no surviving sources for the numbers of monks or canons.

² T.N.A., LR 6/60/1.

³ T.N.A., LR 6/60/1.

⁴ Oxley, Reformation, Appendix IV, p. 285.

⁵ V.C.H., II, p.109, Oath of Supremacy, L&P vii, p.1024.

⁶ V.C.H., II, p.104, Oath of Supremacy, L&P vii, p.1024 (4).

⁷ V.C.H., II, p.135, Deed of Surrender, L&P ix, p.816 (6).

⁸ Morant, I, p.297, gives 7 monks in 1536, perhaps using returns that we have been unable to trace?

⁹ V.C.H., II, p.155, Oath of Supremacy, L&P vii, p.1024.

for liveries of those servants at the priory. At Dunmow, the chief debts of the house were to servants for wages and liveries. Debts for unpaid wages of servants are also recorded for Leighs.

In the first series of Receivers Accounts for Essex (1536-7) there are recorded the numbers of religious and servants in receipt of 'rewards' ('Regardia') for just a few of the smaller Essex monasteries suppressed in 1536, a summary from the Commissioners' original returns. The information is probably most easily expressed in tabulated form (see above), and is compared with information from other sources, taken from V.C.H., vol.II. The data from the Receivers' Accounts are in the columns headed in bold (3-5).

'Rewards' were a mixture, it seems, of a backlog of wages due to individuals (religious or lay) together with a payment to those religious who chose to return to the secular world. The four monks named by the Prior at Hatfield Regis, each have the word

'Pryst' written down after their name in the original returns. It seems very likely that all, or a majority of servants in the various monasteries in 1536, were due a backlog of wages, although why Dunmow is missing from this list (when we know the monastery owed wages to the servants) is unclear. Also, why the summary in the Receivers' Accounts show 17 servants at Hatfield Regis, when 20 are recorded in the original returns, is also a mystery; perhaps three of those servants were, for some reason, not eligible for 'rewards'. Whatever the case, perhaps we should regard the numbers given in the Receivers' accounts as minimum figures.

The data set relating to servants is clearly too small to undertake any really meaningful analysis. We can see, however, that the number of servants recorded in the Receivers' Accounts as receiving 'rewards' varies from 24 at Prittlewell to 4 at Berden. On the face of it, this would suggest a ratio of 6:1



(servants to religious) at Prittlewell, falling to 1:1 at Berden. However, there are many potential categories of servants and this comparison is probably a false one. Of more value might be an assessment of the relative 'values' of each of the houses at the time. This is shown in the table below.

Monastery	Net value (Valor, rounded up or down)	Servants
Tilty	£167	13
Colne	£156	20
Prittlewell	£155	24
Hatfield Regis	£122	20
Leighs	£114	8
Thremhall	£60	8
Berden	£29	4

Again, it must be stated that the dataset as it stands, is too small for any meaningful analysis or discussion, but the implication is just a suggestion at this stage. If more data regarding numbers of servants in Essex monasteries is discovered, we can perhaps return to look at this again. Certainly there is probably much more work that could be undertaken on servants in Essex monasteries.

Ken Crowe

Sources:

Baskerville, G., *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries* (London, 1937).

Jack, S., 'The Last Days of the Smaller Monasteries in England' in *Jnl. Eccles. History*, 21 (April 1970), pp.97-124.

Knowles, D., *The Religious Orders in England*, 3, The Tudor Age (Cambridge, 1959).

Morant, P., *History and Antiquities of the County of Essex* (London, 1768).

Oxley, J.E., *The Reformation in Essex to the Death of Mary* (Manchester, 1965).

Youngs, J., *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1971).

V.C.H., Essex, II.

National Archives:

T.N.A., SC 12/7/43 (Hatfield Regis Dissolution papers).

T.N.A., LR 6/60/1 (Receivers Accounts for Essex, 1536-7).



Prittlewell Priory.
(photo: © Marc Pether-Longman)

The buildings of Littley Park

It was very interesting to read Michael Leach's article on 'Little Leighs estate map of 1735' in the summer 2020 Newsletter and how he linked in the relationship to Leez Priory and Littley Park. As we have an interest in both we would like to add the following.

In his article on Littley Park the late John Hunter maps the medieval park and the subsequent enlargement by Richard Rich from the parish/hundred boundary northwards to Leez Priory and the reduction c.1720. By this time Littley Park complex is shown lying to the west of the paled perimeter. However it was contained within the medieval park and positioned nearly central within the c.1640 plan close to the causeway running from Leez Priory to Crow Gate.

Michael mentions that due to the relatively modest status it is most unlikely that Littley Park would have had a wilderness before its acquisition in 1530. A statement I have to question on two counts, the status of the building and original function. Prior to the acquisition by Rich the use of the building appears to have been as lodge within a park that was mainly wooded at the north and south extremities with the land running W-E to the south of the lodge. What has been shown about Littley Park was that it represented a high status building of L shaped plan. Contained within the cross-wing that was orientated N-S were four large two bay heated chambers, two to the ground floor and two to the first floor with central access and stairs from a range orientated W-E. The dating of the building was based on the unusual way

the crown post was set in diamond form on the tie beam. Other known buildings with this particular feature are the cross wing of Horham Hall, Thaxted of c.1470 suggested date. The roof here is an interesting form of clasped side purlin with wind braces but also incorporating the crown post and collar purlin element of the area. Did a local carpenter not trust this new form of roof coming into Essex from the west? Rayner's Farmhouse at Whittlesford, Cambridgeshire has a tree-ring date of 1471 and The Angel, Broomfield and Black Hall, Moreton could also be dated stylistically to around that date.

At the time the article was written little could be seen of the structure of the three bay 1½ storey west wing other than to confirm the presence of a clasped side purlin roof with wind braces, ovolo moulded mullion windows and a plaster coat of arms of the Devereux family. It was dated as phase II on stylistic and historic grounds. Since then an extensive renovation of the building was undertaken by Jo Bispham and it became clear that the plaster coat of arms was a later introduction, the floor inserted, windows modified and the brick concertina stack added. So what survives of the phase I west range consists of two bays open to the roof at the east (high end) with opposing doors for a cross passage at the west (low end) against a closed truss. The next bay was floored and the building truncated to the west of the bay storey posts. This ground floor room appears to have been entered by a door against the north wall but with the original floor replaced no evidence survives for other features such as stair trap for access to the first floor.



This range is now interpreted as a two bay open hall with a cross passage at the low end and access to a truncated service end and possible kitchen. No evidence of soot deposit from an open hearth was noticed on the roof timbers. At the high end access was gained to the two heated ground floor chambers with stairs to the two upper chambers. The L shaped building created a commodious lodge within the park setting. John Hunter also refers to the fact that 'Littlehey Park' appears in the Pleshey Castle Building Accounts both in 1440-1 and 1464-5 and so was part of the Castle estate with mention of fences and new bridges. Unfortunately he makes no mention of a lodge building but the connection would infer high status.

We would also love to solve the puzzle of 'The Old Wilderness', shown within the pale on the 1735 map. Could one solution be that it is purely a remnant of what John postulated was an area likely to be mainly wooded?

Brenda and Elphin Watkin

Sources:

Hunter J., 'Littley Park, Great Waltham', *Essex Archaeol. Hist.*, XXV, (3rd series), pp.119-24.

Watkin Brenda, 'The Buildings of Littley Park', *Essex Archaeol. Hist.*, XXV, (3rd series), pp.129-33.

Vernacular Architecture Group Spring Conference Programme (2007), p.3.4-3.5.

Horham Hall Guide Book

Moses Wall of Braintree, English Civil War clergyman, secret agent and republican

Braintree is not normally a place one thinks of as the breeding-place for secret agents or spies. Four hundred years ago, it did produce one such agent who played a role in the struggle between Cavaliers and Roundheads.

Braintree in the early to mid 17th century was a cloth-producing town. Its population probably exceeded 2,000 people, most of them engaged in producing light cloths for export to Europe and the Middle East. Local Government was in the hands of the select vestry of St. Michael's church, a body usually known as the Company of Four and Twenty, comprised of the leading local merchants and dedicated to maintaining good order and moral discipline in the town.

Fortunately for Braintree, its main manor was owned by the county of Essex's leading landowner, the Earl of Warwick who lived only a few miles away at Leez Priory and who appointed the vicar of Braintree, Samuel Collins, and acted as the patron and protector of its local rulers.

Moses Wall was born in about 1612. His father, also Moses, was a member of the select vestry until his death in 1623. The Wall family was related by marriage to other prominent local families like the Ayletts, the Motts, Skinners and Talcotts. Moses Wall was educated either at the grammar school in the chapel of St. Michael's church or at Felsted School and then, from 1627 at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, which was a centre of Puritanism,

i.e. of demands for further reformation in the Church of England to remove all relics of Catholicism from its organisations and services.

Wall (like his fellow students from Essex) at Emmanuel was probably intended for a clerical career as his mother's will indicates. But, in the late-1630s, and early-1640s he was moving in radical political and religious circles and had become one of the Earl of Warwick's chaplains even though no record of his ordination survives. Warwick, by then, was the Admiral commanding the Long Parliament's navy in the civil war against King Charles I.

These radical interests explain why, early in 1644, Wall became involved in a secret mission to open talks with the Royalists in Oxford. One of Charles I's supporters, Lord Lovelace, approached Sir Henry Vane the younger, a prominent Long Parliament figure, with a message asking for the opening of talks on a possible peace settlement. This was potentially political dynamite since such talks were considered to be treasonable on both sides. Vane acted very cautiously involving the Speaker of the House of Commons and reliable political allies. The man, however, they chose to send to talk to Lovelace was none other than Moses Wall.

Wall was described by one contemporary as "a tall slender man, some 32 years of age or thereabouts", looking on the outside like a layman, with "brownish hair, both on his head and beard." He went alone on horseback to Windsor and then on to Henley where he held talks overnight with Lord Lovelace. Lovelace's offers according to Wall's report did not

amount to much more than a claim that King Charles preferred Vane and his allies to other Parliamentarians and was prepared to grant toleration in religion to people of tender consciences unwilling to conform to the Church of England. But he could not get Lovelace to put this in writing nor was he able to find out who, in the Royalist capital of Oxford, was in touch with M.P.s or peers, including Warwick's brother, the Earl of Holland, at Westminster. When he reported back in London, it looked as though the whole episode had been abortive.

Unfortunately for Wall, news of these talks had not been kept secret, Sir Henry Vane's enemy, the Earl of Essex, and the Lord General of the Long Parliament's army had learnt of the discussions. Worse still, Essex was Warwick's cousin. Wall, Vane and the others involved in these negotiations found themselves interrogated under threat of being tried as traitors by martial law. Wall had thought those who sent him had the authority to do so. Fortunately, he was barely right, but his career as a secret agent was over and he never got involved again.

The rest of his life was spent arguing for the re-admission of Jews to England and as a supporter of republican rather than monarchical rule. He succeeded on the first but failed on the latter. Even so, he could comfort himself in old age with having been one of the poet John Milton's friends. Moses Wall died pre-1670, but his date of death and place of burial are not known.

Christopher Thompson



Sources:

Noel Malcolm, *Moses Wall: Millenarian, Tolerationist and Friend of Milton*, The Seventeenth Century, XXVII, issue 1 (2012), pp.25-53.

Parliamentary Archives for 18th to 20th January 1643/44 (House of Lords Record Office, Main Papers)

Hartlib Papers Project at the University of Sheffield, 34/4/1A, 3A, 5A, 7A, 9A, 11A, 13A, 15A, 17A-18B, 19A-B, 21A-B, 23A-B, 25A-B, 27A

Walls one surviving letter to Milton is in the British Library, Add. MS. 4292, ff.264-5.

An embittered dispute in Great Waltham

John Oswald's pamphlet

In 1702 a 55 page booklet was published, written by "J.O." and (following the prolix practice of the time) entitled, '*Some Memorandums of Matters of Fact, relating to the original and preliminaries of a Suit in Doctors-Commons between Sir Hugh Everard, Baronet, Promoter, and John Oswald, Vicar of Much-Waltham in Essex ... which are with all Humility, Submitted for the Consideration of the Convocation now assembled*'.

The writer was John Oswald himself who was deprived of his living in the same year. His lengthy and aggrieved account of the prolonged and bitter dispute between him and a local landowner, Sir Hugh Everard, is obviously not without bias. Nevertheless it does provide some interesting insights into parish politics and the administration of

ecclesiastical law at that date. Oswald was a graduate of Edinburgh University, ordained in London in 1677 and appointed to the Great Waltham living in 1684.

Though relations with Sir Hugh and his wife had been good, problems developed in the late 1690s when Oswald tried to obtain overdue payment of tithes owed to him by Sir Hugh for a farm called South House. At this relatively early date, tithes in Great Waltham had been commuted for cash payments. Oswald claimed that, in deference to the death of Sir Hugh's parents, he had delayed making his claim until 1697 when he offered to accept 20 shillings per annum instead of the usual 23 shillings. He also tried to obtain payment for the burial and funeral sermon of Sir Hugh's mother (22 shillings) and for the burial of his father (8 shillings) in August 1694. Sir Hugh was enraged by Oswald's request, and 'gave him some hard word' but, after some delay, paid a little over half of what was due, plus a load of wood worth 20 shillings. This grudging payment was coupled with the threat to 'drive him out of the parish on the basis of his several crimes'.

Initially, the nature of these crimes seems to have been relatively benign. He had presented several dozen parishioners for non-attendance in 1683, as instructed by a circular sent out by the bishop of London in March that year, and had earned a reputation in the parish of being 'a contentious man and an oppressor of the poor' for pressing others for tithe payments. He had also harassed a number of dissenters who had failed to bring their children to church for baptism. Oswald had written to the

bishop asking for his support but had received no reply. In the autumn of 1697, vigilantes had attacked the vicarage late at night, damaging walls, breaking windows and frightening the servants. Due to this damage, as well as the widespread hostility towards him, he felt obliged to move away and to employ a curate at £30 per annum to run the parish in his place. He was further out of pocket due to the 'great Expenses for making good the Dilapidations made by this manag'd Mob'.

By August 1699 matters had deteriorated further and a petition was presented to the bishop charging Oswald with 'gross immoralities and heinous misdemeanours', and demanding his removal from the living. Oswald claimed that this petition had been organised by Sir Hugh and that some signatures had been obtained under duress, or by false pretences. He also implied that Lady Everard had been a 'virulent promoter' of the scandalous stories 'by her everlasting clack', that she was 'the mother of mischief' and 'implacable in her malice against him'. The bishop declined to act, on the grounds that he could not expel Oswald on the grounds of unproven allegations.

In September and December 1699, general meetings of parishioners agreed to the unusual – and possibly illegal – step of raising a rate (of two pence in the pound) to fund a suit against Oswald. This accused him of adultery, fornication, incontinency, drunkenness and neglect of ministerial office, offences alleged to have been committed between 1689 and 1698. There seems to have been some difficulty in collecting the rate, and Oswald claimed that

some defaulters were warned by Sir Hugh or his agents that 'it would be worse for them' if they did not pay up. The articles of complaint from the parish were exhibited in the bishop of London's Consistory Court in November 1699.

Meanwhile Oswald had been mobilising his defence. He obtained a testimonial from 20 neighbouring clergymen stating that he was 'a Sober, Grave, Modest and Religious Person'. He submitted authenticated copies of the archdeacon's visitation reports for the years between 1694 and 1698, showing that, as far as the vicar was concerned, the churchwardens had no complaints and had invariably returned 'omnia bene', though they had presented parishioners for a variety of offences. He also noted that he himself had presented the churchwardens for not receiving communion in 1693 and 1696, and that this grievance would have given them the opportunity to complain if they had had any evidence of his misdeeds. Oswald also deferred to the 'learned doctors in (Doctors') Commons as to whether Parishioners are obliged to contribute to the Costs of a Suit promoted by One who is not an Officer of the Parish'. He was referring, of course, to Sir Hugh who was neither an elected parish official or patron of the living. In addition, Oswald's solicitor advanced the plea that, as the alleged offences were minor and 'not of a heinous nature', his client should be exempted under the King's General Pardon of 1695. It is difficult to understand this course of action (which was, in any case, rejected by the court) as it amounts to a *de facto* admission that offences had been committed by Oswald.



In March 1700 the Consistory Court appointed eight clergymen commissioners to examine and interrogate the witnesses (four on Oswald's behalf, four on Sir Hugh's). They were to deliver the signed and 'closely sealed' depositions to Dr. Newton (chancellor of the diocese of London), or to Edward Alexander, the register (i.e. registrar) of the Consistory Court. These interrogations took place in Broomfield church, and were conducted by Alexander. He also wrote up the depositions, but refused to allow the commissioners to seal them, as had been required by the terms of their appointment. According to Oswald, the commissioners were 'denied Pen and Paper', were not allowed to ask any questions, and were treated 'very insolently' by Alexander. He also claimed that Alexander had made a partial and incomplete record of the witness statements, and that he stayed overnight at Sir Hugh's house in Great Waltham where he would have had the opportunity to make further amendments and alterations before finally sealing the documents.

In May 1700, three of the commissioners acting on Oswald's behalf made representations about these abuses to the Consistory Court, but their plea was rejected. Oswald then appealed to the Court of Arches, but the dean upheld the lower court's decision and expressed 'great Contempt for County Clergy', stating that he would never trust any of them with the execution of a commission. Though Alexander was allowed to present his case, the three commissioners were not permitted to speak. Oswald was fined £9 for the trouble that he had caused, to be paid on pain of excommunication.

Oswald's case was not referred back to the Consistory Court but retained in the Court of Arches where he again pleaded for exemption under the terms of the 1695 General Pardon. The case was referred to the High Court of Delegates for a decision on this point and this was still pending at the time that Oswald wrote his pamphlet. It would appear that the decision went against him, as he was deprived of the living in December 1702 and was replaced by Sir Hugh's son-in-law, Henry Osborne. There is no later evidence of Oswald in the records, though it is assumed he was still alive in 1709 when a second edition of his pamphlet was printed. Sir Hugh died on 2 January 1706 aged 51 years. He was heavily in debt, forcing the sale of his estate.

Discussion

What appears to have started as an amicable relationship between Oswald and the local landowner deteriorated following a dispute over tithe payments and funeral fees. This seems to have ignited a wider parochial resentment about his attempts to collect tithe debts, as well as his presentment of parishioners for failing to receive communion following the directive issued by bishop Compton in 1683. His harassment of dissenters for failing to bring their children for baptism further added to his unpopularity. These disagreements then escalated to accusations of sexual misdemeanours, drunkenness and neglect of clerical duties, none of which had been previously aired. A petition to the bishop was unsuccessful as he was unable to act on unsubstantiated accusations, so the parish made the

unusual decision of raising a parish rate to fund a suit against Oswald in the Consistory Court, a precedent which he considered irregular, if not illegal. Both he, and the commissioners who had been appointed to take witness statements on his behalf, were concerned about their exclusion from this process by the court registrar, Edward Alexander, as well as his failure to make a full and accurate record. Challenges to the process of taking and recording these depositions were rejected by both the consistory court and the Court of Arches on appeal. Oswald also tried to claim dispensation under a general amnesty for minor offences granted by the King in 1695, but the Court of Arches was unable to rule on this matter and referred the case on to the High Court of Delegates for a decision. This was the ultimate court of appeal which sat on an ad hoc basis, and consisted of three judges and three doctors of civil law. It is surprising that these cases do not appear in the available indexes, but the decision must have gone against Oswald as he was deprived of his living in December 1702.

All the church courts, as well as the High Court of Delegates, based their judgment on written depositions and did not cross question witnesses, plaintiffs or defendants, so it was reasonable for Oswald to be concerned about the importance of the accuracy of their record. It is surprising that the eight commissioners, who had been appointed by the court to take and oversee them, were effectively excluded from the process, though perhaps less so in the light of the very condescending contempt for rural

clergy that was expressed by the dean of the Court of Arches when he rejected Oswald's appeal.

Unless Oswald had independent financial means he would have found himself in a very difficult position. The cost of taking cases to the Court of Arches was considerable, and he had had to pay for a curate to carry out his responsibilities for several years. He does not appear to have obtained another living after his deprivation and nothing more is known of his subsequent life. As he had been a graduate of Edinburgh University, it is possible that he returned to Scotland. He was alive seven years later when he republished his pamphlet, both of which were addressed to Convocation, perhaps in an attempt to obtain changes to church government to assist clergy in similar situations. A copy of his 1702 publication, recently sold by an Essex bookseller, had belonged to Dr. Jane, a prominent Tory member of Convocation.

Very little is known of his principal adversary, Sir Hugh Everard. We only have one side of the story from Oswald himself; he may have been a confrontational individual who pressed for his dues to an extent that was considered unreasonable by the standards of the time. It is difficult to know how genuine the accusations of drunkenness and sexual misdemeanours were. Drunkenness in particular was a favoured cudgel with which to beat unpopular clergy at that time, but it is hard to read his pamphlet and not feel that he was hard done by, even though his account can hardly have been impartial.

Michael Leach



Sources:

Morant, P., *History and Antiquities of the County of Essex*, II, (London, 1768), p.88, p.90.

Oswald, J., *Some Memorandums ... relating to ... a Suit in Doctors-Commons* (London, 1702 and 1709).

Essex Review, XXIV (1915), pp.168-177.

Exchequer suit re title 1802-9, refs to Oswald dispute, ERO: D/DGh L1.

Great Waltham parish registers 1640-1702, ERO: D/P 137/1/4.

Heal, F. and Holmes, C., *The Gentry of England and Wales 1500-1700*, (H. England. Social & C, under Heal).

The restoration of Easton Park

On 30th April 2020, Uttlesford District Council ('U.D.C.') voted to withdraw its draft Local Plan issued in 2017 which proposed the creation of three 'garden communities' one for 10,000 dwellings to be located on the historic deer park at Little Easton known as Easton Park.

U.D.C. is now starting to formulate a new plan which provides the opportunity for the restoration of this ancient park which was badly damaged in World War II having been requisitioned by the War Office in 1940 to build an airfield used by U.S. and R.A.F. bomber squadrons.

A campaign to this end is being led by the Local Residents Action Group



Engraving of Easton Lodge.
(engraving: © W. Bartlett (1832))

known as Stop Easton Park ('S.E.P.') that was set up in 2017 to support the Little Easton Parish Council ('L.E.P.C.') in its efforts to defeat the Local Plan. The restoration campaign was launched on 8th May 2020, the 75th anniversary of V.E. Day, a fitting date for an initiative to repair the damages of World War II, and set out in detail in a document issued on 16th July. Easton Park is not a sustainable location for new housing, whether

10,000 or any smaller number, and so the park should be restored to its former glory and opened to the general public as stipulated by its former owner, the Countess of Warwick, prior to her death in 1938.

The Park is crossed by multiple by-ways and footpaths and sits at the centre of a group of related assets including High Wood, a Site of Special Scientific Interest ('S.S.S.I.'). to the south, The Grade II* listed Stone Hall to the



A new Country Park for Uttlesford.



south east, The Lays Wood to the north east, the Grade II listed gardens of Easton Lodge to the north and the Conservation Area surrounding the Grade I listed Norman church and Little Easton Manor to the north east. The area also includes an exceptional range of listed buildings most of which were formerly part of The Easton Lodge Estate and as such provides a rare insight into a large country estate at the turn of the 19th/20th centuries.

In 1994, a proposal to build 2,500 dwellings on Easton Park was rejected by the Inspector. In 2017, U.D.C. issued a draft Local Plan including a proposed allocation to build 10,000 dwellings at Easton Park but following concerns expressed by the Inspectors in January 2020, the draft Plan was withdrawn on 30 April following a vote backed by an overwhelming majority of Councillors.

Easton Park is potentially a key asset both for the district of Uttlesford and for the county of Essex. Extensive building in recent years in the locality, notably in Bishops Stortford, Great Dunmow and Takeley, has highlighted the need for a large open space, a destination park, to serve the needs of the local community. This need is most clearly demonstrated by the current plight of Hatfield Forest, a National Nature Reserve ('N.N.R.') and S.S.S.I. which is suffering severe degradation due to excessive use resulting from house building in the area.

The indisputable merits of Easton Park as an open space accessible to the general public are set out in the S.E.P. document of 16th July available on the web site at www.stopeastonpark.co.uk

Stop Easton Park

25 Years of The Gibberd Garden

Sir Frederick Gibberd, one of the outstanding architects of his age, who designed Liverpool Roman Catholic Cathedral and the London Mosque, chose to live his later years in a house that he bought on the outskirts of Harlow New Town, of which he was the Master Planner.

Attached to the house are seven acres of land, on which Sir Frederick developed a magnificent modern garden, with Corinthian columns, a castle surrounded by a moat (built for his grandchildren), an avenue of trees reminiscent of a cathedral, a huge variety of trees and plants, plus a fascinating collection of sculptures and hidden haunts.

Sir Frederick died in 1984 and bequeathed his house and garden to Harlow District Council. Unfortunately, however, his Will was challenged and the consequent legal fees mounted to a level at which not only his art collection but the house and garden as well would need to be sold to meet the cost.

At this point, a meeting was called of concerned people, to try to save the garden and the result was the formation of a Trust, on 25th June 1995, charged with raising the funds needed to save the garden.

A friendly landowner, who remained anonymous, agreed to buy the property while the Trust, chaired by Hugh Kerr, a local Member of the European Parliament, got to work on its mission. An application for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund was eventually successful and £559,000 was obtained to buy back the Garden and House and employ a full-time gardener

to restore the Garden. Jean Farley was appointed as gardener and the Trust continued in charge.

That was 25 years ago, and the Garden has flourished ever since under the guidance of the Trust. It is open to visitors during the summer months – as is the House, which is used as an exhibition space and for the storage of Sir Frederick's archives and books.

Fundraising and cultural events are held in the Garden and supporters can become Friends by paying an annual subscription. The Mulberry Trust has made an annual grant and a bungalow (originally built for the gardener) is let to a tenant, thus generating additional funding to support the Garden.

The Garden now has two part-time self-employed gardeners who do a splendid job, but it could not continue without the team of volunteers who undertake the administration, provide refreshments and participate in the care of the Garden and House.

Lady Pat Gibberd, Sir Frederick's widow, lived in the House and took an immense interest in the Garden until her death a number of years ago. Jane and Mac Quinton have played a

vital role over the years and still do. Some of the original pioneers have passed away, but Inger Collins, widow of Ken (a former Chairman) still plays an active part in the Garden.

To commemorate 25 years of success, Annalise Taylor has led an oral history project and produced a booklet recording this story, which is a fascinating read.

Most of the Garden's income is from visitors on open days, – which has been seriously affected due to Covid-19 and the necessary closure during the early part of the year. It is ironic that, after 25 years, a fundraising appeal has again been launched, as can be seen on the website at www.thegibberd garden.co.uk

The Gibberd Garden, with its splendid collection of sculptures, is a gem which attracts visitors not only from the environs of Harlow but from all parts of Britain – and overseas. The saving of the Gibberd Garden is an achievement that enhances Harlow and the Essex countryside in which it is situated.

Stan Newens
Chair– The Gibberd Garden Trust



Stan Newens in the Gibberd Garden.



New publications

Victoria County History, Vol.XII: *St. Osyth to the Naze: North-East Essex Coastal Parishes*, pt.1: St. Osyth, Great and Little Clacton, Frinton, Great and Little Holland, edited by Christopher C. Thornton and Herbert Eiden – see enclosed flyer for further details.

A Glimpse Back at Halstead: A Tribute to Doreen Potts – Local Historian, by Pam Corder-Birch, published by Halstead and District Local History Society.

The book was written as a tribute to Doreen, a long standing and highly respected member of Halstead and District Local History Society who sadly died last year. It contains 136 pages with numerous photographs and illustrations. It covers aspects of the history of the town, the majority of which has not previously been published. New articles and photographs include, shops, transport and horse and cart to charabancs and buses, the Colne Valley and Halstead Railway, old houses and farms and the families who lived in them. Also included are social and sporting events and photographs of residents at work and play, as well as tributes to some of the Halstead men who fought in the First and Second World Wars.

Copies of the book are available from the author, Pam Corder-Birch at Rustlings, Howe Drive, Halstead CO9 2QL. Price: £12.95 plus £3 postage and packing – cheques payable to 'Halstead and District Local History Society'.

Book reviews

'and the bishop expressed approval': a brief architectural history of Broomfield church to Chancellor's restoration of 1868-71 by Neil Wiffen. P.C.C. of St. Mary with St. Leonard, the Parish Church. The booklet is available at £7.50 from the church, or by post at £10.00. Cheque payable to 'St. Mary's Broomfield P.C.C.' to Dr. T. Stevens, 248 Broomfield Road, Chelmsford CM1 4DY

Forming part of the parish's 'People and Stone' series of lectures and booklets local historian Neil Wiffen has produced a well-illustrated essay in the style of a lengthened *Essex Journal* article. Indeed in A4 format this booklet could sit neatly on the shelf with this publication.

Neil Wiffen charts the history of the building from the Norman Conquest through to the extensive restorations by the Chelmsford and London architect Frederic Chancellor (1825-1918). The Nave and part of the Chancel date from the second half of the 11th century reusing a considerable amount of Roman brick salvaged from a nearby field named Dragon's Foot Field. It possesses a round flint-built west tower dated to around 1100-25. The wall of the tower is exposed now but was plastered when Philip Morant wrote his *History of Essex* in 1768, and appears to have remained so until at least a century later.

The Victorian era witnessed many 'improvements' to 'decayed' churches with a keenness to build in the Gothic Revival style, and extend buildings to accommodate a growing population. The population of Broomfield had grown from 467 to 851 in the fifty years



Broomfield church.

to 1851 whilst the seating capacity of the church was only 290. The north aisle was rebuilt adding a further 139 seats and, as the illustration shows, the Chancel was substantially rebuilt. It was later said, by Kenneth Dixon Box in 1973, to be one of Chancellor's more successful restorations.

The Society was delighted to be able to contribute a photograph of substantial rebuilding work in progress from its two volume collection of Victorian Church Photographs (now ERO A14969).

Andrew Smith

A Short History of the Parish Church of St. John the Evangelist, Moulsham, Chelmsford and its Clergy. Part 1: 1834-1937. D.R. Broad. Grosvenor House Publishing Ltd, Tolworth, Surrey. (2019). ISBN 978-1-78623-518-3. 362 pages including index, Illustrated. £13.00 (paperback) or £9.00 from the author, if collected, 13 St. Vincent's Road, Chelmsford CM2 9PS.

From its origins as a chapel and its first eight incumbents down to 1950, Rex Broad a local church member has produced a lively history of the people of Moulsham parish which was created to provide for the growing population of Victorian Chelmsford.

Tony Tuckwell in the Foreword describes the book as "meticulously researched".

Set out in the Preface, the author aims to give "some idea of the development of the building, its style of worship over the years, its clergy, and, to a lesser extent, its impact on the parish of Moulsham in the period of this book".

The chapel as built was completed in a simplified form to that originally planned. It was badly damaged in a gas explosion in 1874 and repaired. The church was enlarged with a west tower added in 1883.

The parish was a demanding one in terms of ministry to its residents. The author wonders why Robert Travers

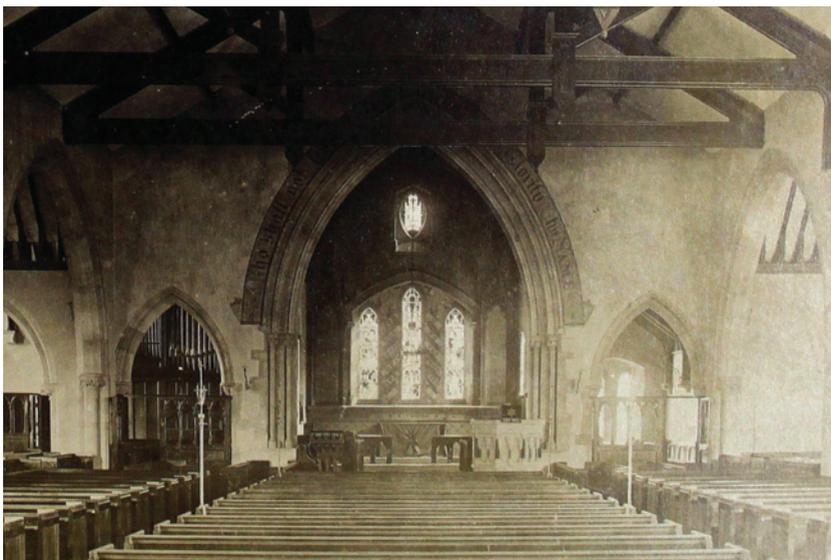


Saulez accepted the post of vicar in 1901, having previous charge of the wealthy rural parish of Belchamp St. Paul: Moulsham was “a diverse and extensive parish, with its singular history of wearing out incumbents”. Saulez did not receive a warm welcome. At his first Vestry meeting George Bragg, “a self-made painter and decorator” accused him of being “a member of that illegal, law-breaking, notoriously Romanising society, the English Church Union”. The Vicar confirmed that this was so and, among the uproar reported verbatim in the press Mr. Cutts said “if there was anything ... distasteful to the majority of the congregation, the Vicar would give way in a moment”. In those times when the Vicar was supposedly very much in charge of the parish there were some who objected to various changes made. Mr. Ripper resigned as organist

following the vicar’s appointment of Douglas Smith, a high churchman, as choirmaster. Saulez’s high church leanings, like wanting to place lit candles on the altar or changing Mattins to midday, caused quite a stir. Saulez’s proposal for an exchange of the living with William James Pressey of Foxearth became a public embarrassment. He moved to a vacancy at Willingale Doe in 1906 having never found it easy to work with lay people in authority “particularly when their ideas clashed with his own; yet he was much missed by a significant proportion of the parish when he left”.

Rev. William J Pressey became Moulsham’s next vicar reading the Thirty-Nine Articles in lieu of a sermon at his first service. Here was someone completely different.

Every heated argument was recorded for posterity – a gift to a modern local historian such as Rex Broad.



Moulsham church interior.

A footnote: Pressey's incumbency lasted throughout World War I; which ended when he was appointed vicar at Margaretting in 1918. Rex Broad's narrative provides interesting detail of these times including the fact that in 1915 "with all the movements of troops from the battlefields of the Great War to England (and vice versa) new and vigorous strains of influenza were beginning to make their mark on the population at home, and William Pressey was taken very ill early in that year". His recuperation took many months. History teaches us a lot.

Andrew Smith

The two volume collection of church photographs (ESAH S/LIB48-9) now deposited at the E.R.O (A14969), contains two photographs of the church.

Rex Broad writes: "The first (SLIB94906F) showing the interior of the church, is of value as it shows the church as it was in early 1874 before a workman, installing gas lighting, 'struck a match to see if he could find a leak'. The resulting bang destroyed almost everything except the walls. We have a copy of this, but it was deemed too poor to reproduce in the book. The other photograph (SLIB94906G) shows the church just after the tower had been added in 1883. Two prominent graves are not in the photograph which enables it to be dated to 1883-6."



Mousham church exterior.

MEMBERSHIP

Subscriptions are due on 1st January each year as follows:

Single Member – £25

Family Membership – £30

Student – £15

Associate Member – £15

Institutions – £25

Associate Institutions – £15

NAMES AND ADDRESSES

Secretary

Howard Brooks

13 Greenacres

Mile End, Colchester

Essex CO4 5DX

howard000brooks@gmail.com

Membership Secretary

Martin Stuchfield

Pentlow Hall

Pentlow

Essex CO10 7SP

martinstuchfield@pentlowhall.uk

Librarian

Jane Pearson

Cob Cottage, The Street

Great Tey, Colchester

Essex CO6 1JS

drjanepearson@hotmail.com

Enquiries about delayed or missing publications and about the supply of recent back numbers should be addressed to the Secretary.

THE SOCIETY'S PUBLICATION AND RESEARCH FUND (PRF)

This Endowment Fund supports the publication of articles in the *Transactions* of the Society as well as Occasional Papers. It is also available to support research consistent with the Society's objectives. As an endowment fund, only the interest earned from it can be used to provide such support. The amount of the Fund is in excess of £50,000 and we continue to seek further donations into this.

Donations for this Fund, or to the Society's General Fund where the capital can also be used in support of the Society's objectives, are welcome.

Donations should be made payable to the 'Essex Society for Archaeology and History' and could attract Gift Aid.

Please address enquiries to the Hon. Treasurer, Bill Abbott at 13 Sovereign Crescent, Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3UZ or bill.abbott@btinternet.com.

DATA PROTECTION ACT

In order to run the Society it is necessary to keep paper and electronic records of members' names and addresses. It is the Society's policy to keep members' names, addresses, telephone numbers and subscription status only. This information is disclosed to no one, inside or outside the Society, other than those officers and members of Council who need it in order to run the organisation.

Members do have the right to refuse to allow any information about them to be stored on computer, and they should let me know if this is their wish. However, we hope that this note will reassure members that the very limited information held about them is secure and will not be used for any purpose other than the efficient running of the Society. Anyone requiring further details can contact me, or the Newsletter Editor.

Howard Brooks

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2021

Wednesday, 17th March

Tour of Miss Willmott's Garden, Warley Place, Brentwood. Miss Willmott was an outstanding gardener, the first woman invited to serve on an R.H.S. committee. Her famous garden fell into ruin after her death in 1934 and is being restored by the Essex Wildlife Trust. Millions of daffodils still bloom in the spring.

Wednesday, 14th April

'Clock, Beer, and Bad Water – a Walk along Stoneham Street, Coggeshall' with local historian Trevor Disley.

Friday, 28th May

Nick Wickenden, recently retired from Chelmsford Museum, will lead us on a walking tour of Pleshey and its Castle.

Saturday, 26th June

Annual General Meeting. Special Collections Room, Albert Sloman Library, University of Essex.

Wednesday, 14th July

Paul Sealey, for many years head of Archaeology at Colchester Museum, will pick his favourite exhibits in the museum and explain their provenance and significance.

Saturday, 6th November

Annual Symposium at Chelmsford. Speakers will include Sophia Adams of Glasgow University who will talk on the Havering Hoard and Martin Astell of the Essex Record Office.

Saturday, 13th November

Essex Industrial Archaeology Group ('E.I.A.G.') Annual meeting at Chelmsford. Speaker: Dr. Catherine Pearson – The Frederick Roberts archive of industrial history – Marconi and Hoffmann.

Please note: Covid regulations may force the cancellation or postponement of these events.

The visits on the Society's programme are open to members and associate members only. The Society can accept no liability for loss or injury sustained by members attending any of its programmed events. Members are asked to take care when visiting old buildings or sites and to alert others to any obvious risks. Please respect the privacy of those who invite us into their homes.

It is very important that the Society can keep in communication with you regularly. Quite apart from the present crisis, but also in the future, when printed newsletters cease and digital news will be distributed electronically from early next year. **If you have an email address will you please remember to email it to our Membership Secretary, Martin Stuchfield at martinstuchfield@pentlowhall.uk.**