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Newsletter

Essex Society for Archaeology and History



THE INDEPENDENT CHAPEL, CASTLE-MEDDINGHAM, ESSEX.

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Copy for the next issue should be sent to the editor at the above address by no later than 4th July 2022.

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 The Independent Chapel, Castle Hedingham. The Independent Chapel, built in 1842 which now houses the United Reformed Church. © Grosvenor Prints

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From the President

Nick Wickenden

I hope everyone had an enjoyable and safe Christmas and New Year. We all hope fervently that 2022 will prove to be a better year than the previous two. Your Officers and Council are doing their best to bring you a full programme for the year.

On that note, I thought it would be interesting to record some of the workload that the Officers take on as volunteers.

The Secretary is Howard Brooks who acts as the main point of contact for both members of the public, and Council and ordinary Members. He receives some 30-40 emails every month from people wishing to join, students and researchers seeking grants, as well as a wide variety of other archaeological or historical queries, and of course spam. These he responds to accordingly, or feeds them to others. Whilst the majority of our members receive information from us by email, a small number are still only contactable by letter, so Howard prints these off, puts them in envelopes, and posts them (incidentally, if you are one of these but you could receive information via email, please do let Howard know!). Howard also acts as the conduit with Council, sending out agendas etc - although minutes are kindly taken and written up by Lucy Jack.

Our Treasurer, Bill Abbott, expertly oversees our deposits of just under £300,000, as cheques become increasingly a thing of the past, a lot of our financial transactions are now conducted by BACS. One area we have been developing is the awarding of grants to deserving individuals and projects, working in related areas in the county that we feel deserve financial support. I am not talking massive sums, most grants are in the hundreds up to £1000 or so, but we do have the money sitting in the bank and feel we need to use it more. I am well aware personally how small sums of money from an institution such as ours, can demonstrate local support for deserving projects and can unlock much larger sums from organisations such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It is early days, and an application form can be found on the website, but we are already helping a doctoral student conduct surveys of Epping Forest in an effort to find evidence of Romanichal and Traveller inhabitation of the forest from 18th-19th centuries.

Our Membership Secretary is Martin Stuchfield, who – along with Bill – has managed to bring our institutional membership and subscriptions up to date. No mean feat. He is also responsible for overseeing the creation of the Society's new website, where, inter alia, people can find pdfs of every single copy of the Transactions except for the last five, of which paid up Members obviously receive a hard copy. He is currently working on digitising back copies of the Essex Review, having successfully tackled the Essex Journal, from its inception in 1966. Martin is also currently negotiating with our website gurus to take on the Essex Place Names database. This has been maintained to date by the University of Essex, but as staff there leave, and the technology becomes increasingly moribund, we do want to bring the database under our own website.

A relatively new but increasingly popular and active section within ESAH is the Essex Industrial Archaeological Group (EIAG) under the chairmanship of Tony Crosby. Again, their recent newsletters can be found on the website.

We have no fewer than three publication editors. Paul Gilman is editor of the main Transactions and the Occasional Papers Series. Draft contents and funding arrangements are discussed with the Publications and Research Committee. He deals with authors, sends out drafts to (anonymous) referees for detailed comment, reports these back to authors, reads and edits the whole volume. He also liaises with the printers regarding the layout of the papers, and liaises with the authors over the proofs. The printing does not come cheap, and there are grants to apply for. The balance of costs then has to be approved by Council, to be taken from the Publications and Research Fund.

The same steps are broadly taken by our other two editors, Steve Pollington who took over the Essex Journal from Neil Wiffen and who has produced two excellent editions so far, and Victoria Rathmill, who has brought the Newsletter into the digital age, and who is also looking to improve the Society's Social Media presence, once the Society decides what sort of presence it needs, wants and is capable of.

That last point is important. There are many things that we feel the Society should be doing, but it is not always easy to find the personnel with the skills and time to deliver. I think, for instance, of the need to encourage young budding archaeologists and historians, I think of contacts with local societies (at which Congress so excelled) or our county museums and their friends and volunteers. I also think of formal planning consultations, where we do our best but could do better. Recent planning consultations and decisions are revolving around massive solar farms in the county, including one 430 hectares in extent.

So what are the aims and objectives of the Society, both now and for the next ten years ? What are our main 'products' ? Your immediate past President, Nigel Brown, is continuing to work up a 10 year Strategy for the Society, and has held several zoom working meetings to draft this up. A draft for discussion will shortly be sent to members for comment.

Everyone agrees that one of the Society's cornerstones is its programme of visits and other events. It is therefore such a shame that this was hit so drastically by COVID in both 2020 and 2021. Our Programme Secretary (and Librarian) , Jane Pearson, is determined not only to get this back on track, but to diversify and make the programme more appealing to a wider range of our members. Members will shortly be receiving the 2022 programme .

There are many others who support the work of the Society, through membership of sub committees, working parties, and representing ESAH on other bodies. I hope I have shown you that the 'products' enjoyed by members and others in the county and beyond are only achievable by the hard work and volunteer hours put in by others, and I applaud everyone who contributes in whatever way they can and do. Thank you.

Dr Jennifer Ward

Society members will be saddened to hear the news of the recent death of Dr Jennifer Ward, the distinguished medieval historian, retired Professor of History at Goldsmith's College, University of London, and the first female president of ESAH. As many members of ESAH Council have commented, Jenny was a marvellous scholar who made many important contributions to her specialist field in medieval women's studies as well as to the history of medieval and Tudor Essex. Her commitment to Essex was expressed in her unwavering support for many historical societies across Essex, including the Essex Record Office, FHE, and VCH. She was a very dedicated teacher; generous and encouraging with her time and knowledge, helping countless number of professional and amateur historians alike. She was a kind and charming person who will be very much missed by us all.

The society extends its deepest condolences to Jenny's family. A fuller account of her life and works will appear in a future edition of the Transactions.

Chris Thornton, on behalf of ESAH Council. 10th February 2022.

Consultation on Essex Society for Archaeology & History: 10-year Strategy

As you may know for some time the ESAH Council has been considering a Strategy for the Society's future development; 2022 is the 170th anniversary of the Society, and it is hoped that the Strategy will be adopted at this year's AGM. Despite its long history ESAH has never had a formal strategy, though of course it has always thought ahead. The Strategy is intended to help us maintain and develop our core activities in a rapidly changing world and to consider other areas that ESAH might usefully become more involved with.

The draft strategy covers a lot of activities, but very little in it requires particularly urgent action. Though we may choose to move forward with some things quite quickly, we can take our time over progressing things. That is one of the benefits of having a 10-year strategy for a Society that has been around for 170 years and fully intends to continue for at least another hundred.

Implementation will be critical, what seem like quite simple actions can have hidden complexities. Accordingly, assuming the Strategy is adopted at the AGM, Council, working with its committees, will develop an implementation plan.

Council would very much like to have input from ESAH members. Any comments you might have on the draft strategy, which is set out below, or on how the strategy might best be implemented should be sent to nnbrown@btinternet.com For those of you receiving this as hard copy and wishing to respond by letter, please send your comments to the Honorary Secretary; Howard Brooks, 13, Greenacres, Mile End, Colchester, Essex, CO4 5DX

Deadline for receipt of comments is Friday 1st April.

On behalf of the Council, I would particularly like to thank Nigel Brown for all his efforts in preparing the draft strategy.

Nick Wickenden, President Essex Society for Archaeology and History

Draft Essex Society for Archaeology & History (ESAH) 10-year Strategy

Vision

'...the past is not dead, but is living in us, and will be alive in the future which we are helping to make...' William Morris

1. Introduction

Appropriately our vision is taken from the words of that great Essex man and early conservationist William Morris. Implementation of the strategy set out below will help us maintain and develop a deep and lively interest in all aspects of the archaeology and history of Essex. It will strengthen our Society's position as a vital centre for the dissemination of knowledge of the County's past and enable us to work more closely with others to ensure that the past is both conserved and helps shape the future of Essex.

2. Dissemination

This has been and will remain the core of the Society's activities with Essex Archaeology and History at its heart. The strategy will seek to maintain that, whilst developing our approach to dissemination in the context of the present and future potential of digital publication.

2.1 Essex Archaeology and History 'Transactions' (EAH)

First Phase: such is the range of material known or likely to be available for EAH in the next few years that it can reasonably be anticipated publication will continue in the existing format.

Second Phase: continue publication as now whilst considering future options, hard copy, hybrid or digital. Consult with membership, contributors, and users regarding future possibilities. A useful initial step could be to make EAH available via the Archaeological Data Service (ADS), as some other County Societies have already done.

Third Phase: decide ways of implementing any desired changes identified in phase two.

2.2 Essex Journal (EJ)

Consideration of the future format of EJ should broadly follow that outlined for EAH above, the 'magazine' format of EJ may tend to favour maintenance of a hard copy format.

2.3 Occasional Papers (occ paps)

Hitherto production of occ paps has been less regularised and systematic than for EAH and EJ, partly because of their nature.

Initially, the two occ paps currently nearing production can reasonably be expected to proceed under the current somewhat ad hoc arrangements. Unlike EAH, EJ and the newsletter, occ paps do not have a specific editor and the strategy will aim to regularise the editorial arrangements for occ paps.

Consideration should be given to the number of occ paps we produce and the topics they cover, which at the moment include both articles rather too long for EAH and in-depth consideration of particular subjects. It may be that inviting or commissioning more synthesis or thematic volumes would be useful.

As for EAH and EJ consideration should be given for future options, hard copy, hybrid or digital once again any proposals for such changes will be developed in consultation with membership, contributors, and users.

2.4 Newsletters

The ESAH newsletter is a vital part of services to members and its regular appearance is a key element in the functioning of the Society. In addition, the Essex Industrial Archaeology Group (EIAG) produces its own newsletter which is sent to EIAG members and made available to the wider ESAH membership via our website.

The current mix of short articles, often but not always inspired by current research and issues, together with some news items provides an interesting read very much in line with the newsletters of comparable societies and that will be maintained.

Following the recent switch to digital distribution, contributors will be encouraged to include more images and active links in their items, in the longer-term consideration will be given to developing the potential of the digital format. In conjunction with 2.5, and 2.6 below consideration will be given to inclusion of more short news items.

2.5 Website

The success of the recent revisions and relaunch has given us a more effective and stable website.

Initially arrangements will be put in place to ensure that the website is maintained and updated so that it remains live. Subsequently consideration should be given to the website's relationship to the other aspects of the strategy so that it becomes a hub for the Society's activities. An early development might be online booking for Society events (see 4 below)

2.6 Twitter and other social media

At present the Society has had little involvement with social media, probably, in part at least, the result of the age profile of its membership in general and Council in particular. It is clear that situation will need to change during the life of this strategy.

The Society's Twitter account which had fallen into abeyance has recently been taken over by the current newsletter editor and been revitalised. In the first instance Twitter should be seen as a means of the Society communicating with the wider world (there may be links to 7 below). Consideration will be given to more active and effective use of social media.

3. Library

The Library is the Society's most valuable asset both intellectually and financially, it is the most extensive library devoted to the archaeology and history of Essex, and probably the finest archaeological library in the East of England outside Cambridge. Its development and maintenance is and will remain, part of the core purpose of the Society. Whilst digital publication may become dominant in future decades, we know that books can last for many hundreds of years, digital information may prove to be similarly long-lasting, but it is conceivable its accessibility may be short lived.

The Society will continue to seek to maintain the Library's complete runs of journals and acquire books to enhance and maintain its coverage.

The partnership with the University Library is essential and will be maintained and developed to encourage use of our Library, that relationship will clearly be vital to the development of the Library as digital publication becomes more widespread. Here there is a clear link with 2 above, indeed the Society's website with its digitally available runs of EAH, newsletter and EJ can already be seen as an integral part of the Library.

4. Events

Events such as visits, annual symposium, Morant lecture, Morant Lunch etc have been an integral part of the Society since its inception, though their variety and nature has of course changed over the years. The EIAG arranges a specialised programme of lectures and visits including a biennial Industrial Heritage Fair. It is essential that Societies like ESAH have such events which are by their nature social occasions. The pandemic has brought the programme of events more or less to a halt over the last couple of years, providing an enforced pause to consider future arrangements.

Initial actions will need to be around capacity, the current Programme Secretary is also the Society's Librarian, bookings are made through the Society's Secretary, a system which was instituted as a temporary measure but has now been going on for some years. A permanent booking system, perhaps online, must be created as a priority, additional members of the Programme Committee should be sought to actively support the work of the Programme Secretary.

The annual symposium is a core event for the Society's annual programme, but it appears the Morant lunch may have run its course and other options will be considered, perhaps a more informal buffet to allow greater circulation and conversation, perhaps combined with the Morant Lecture. In the longer term the range and nature of the Society's visits will be reviewed.

5. Grants

The recent adoption of an application form for or grants will give the Society the possibility of developing a better understanding of the range of grants it gives each year. In the longer term the Society, may wish to consider promoting particular types of activity, research and publication by targeting its grant funding.

6. Planning and land management issues

6.1 individual Planning applications and strategic issues

Our engagement with these issues is long standing but has always been somewhat ad hoc, and the Strategy provides an opportunity for us to consider how we might wish to develop our role. Currently the Society comments quite regularly and fully on strategic planning issues such as, major infrastructure projects, changes to planning process etc, though even there the Society's has not commented on all such schemes. By contrast the Society comments on very few individual planning applications and generally on a somewhat ad hoc basis. That is hardly surprising and unlikely to change much, given the number of applications across the County which have some impact on heritage assets (to use the current planning jargon), and the Society's relatively limited capacity in these matters. The EIAG is more actively engaged with planning issues, regularly commenting on applications which affect industrial buildings and is occasionally asked, by Essex County Council Place Services, to provide specialist advice.

The Society will consider if it wishes to become more actively involved in planning matters. If so, it will need to increase its capacity, firstly in the number of people who prepare comment on the Society's behalf, secondly in developing the necessary skills. The Society's members will have considerable specialist knowledge but perhaps less skill in engaging in with the planning process. The first issue will need at least a small group of members willing to take on the role of commenting on behalf ESAH and committing to such training as may be necessary. It is uncertain what appetite there may be for that. Identifying training may be simpler (though it will require some financial commitment on behalf of the Society) there are often appropriate courses available, and it may be that bespoke training could be commissioned for Society members.

Should the Society choose to develop its engagement with planning matters, it may be sensible in the first instance, to develop the Society's capacity in dealing with Strategic issues. If the planning system remains as it currently is, the Strategic level is probably where the Society can most effectively engage with the planning process. A principal aim might be for the Society to provide input into the next round of Local Plans likely to be under development at the end of this decade and provide comment on major infrastructure schemes as they arise. Currently the number and range of individual planning applications are too great for the Society to comment on. Once it has developed capacity at the Strategic level, considering how to better engage with individual applications may be something for the next ten-year strategy in the 2030s.

Following last year's White Paper, it appeared that a new Planning Bill would introduce sweeping changes to the current system, however, following the decision to postpone the Bill it seems that drastic change is less likely, though clearly change is still in the offing. Should changes to the planning system along the lines of those suggested by the White Paper be introduced, engagement at the strategic level will be even more important, since the plan making stage will be pretty much the sole option for consideration of historic environment issues, comment on individual applications is unlikely to be possible.

6.2 Other land management issues, Green Infrastructure, natural environment enhancement

This area has been growing in importance in recent decades a trend which looks set to continue. Agri-environment schemes, habitat creation, extensive tree planting, flood risk management both on the coast and in river and stream valleys can have considerable historic environment impacts. Here again the best role for ESAH may be in providing input at a strategic level and recently, Essex County Council has added ESAH to its list of consultees on Green Infrastructure initiatives.

7. Relations with external bodies

7.1 Local

As the oldest, largest and probably best resourced Society concerned with archaeology and history in the County it would be useful to develop closer ties with organisations within the Essex which share our aims. That is perhaps particularly so since we have inherited the Essex Archaeological and Historical Congress's resources and should perhaps begin to take on something of Congress's co-ordinating role.

An initial step might be to become corporate members of the Friends organisations for all of the accredited museums in Essex, and of Museums Essex. That would have the practical advantage showing our support for organisations across the county, help raise our profile and potentially generate a range of items for our newsletter and website. We could then consider our relations with other local archaeological and historical societies and organisations which are concerned with historic landscapes such as Essex Gardens Trust, Gardens of Easton Lodge, Marks Hall etc

7.2 Wider world

Whilst our focus has always been and will always remain on Essex, we have never pursued our aims narrowly, indeed the very nature of Essex on the edge of the southern North Sea, its coast indented by creeks and estuaries and latterly close to London means that it has always been part of the wider world. ESAH already has representation on the Council for British Archaeology's East of England and London Regional Groups, and EIAG is a member of both, the Association for Industrial Archaeology and European Route of Industrial Archaeology. It might be sensible for ESAH to join the Heritage Alliance, as a number of other County Archaeological Societies already have. That would help us develop a way forward for point 5 above and would certainly help to generate news items for the website and newsletter. Closer relations with the Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT) would be helpful particularly with regard to 6.2 above and of course the EWT owns or manages many of the most significant historic landscapes in Essex. Similarly closer relations with the National Trust might be beneficial.

8. Diversity

8.1 Gender

Only one woman has ever held the office of President of the Society for a full term, Jennifer Ward, in addition Ann Turner served as President for one year, other than that the Presidency has been a male preserve. On the Society's Council men outnumber women by a considerable margin, there seems no reason why that should be so. The Society will move toward a better gender balance on its council during the life of this strategy and will seek to ensure that there is a woman president by the end of this strategy period (preferably before) and a better gender balance in the presidency thereafter.

8.2 Ethnicity

As noted in 7.2 above by its very nature of Essex on the edge of the southern North Sea, its coast indented by creeks and estuaries and latterly close to London means that it has always been part of the wider world. The Society will endeavour to reflect the deep connections Essex has had, from remote prehistory onward with the rest of Europe and with the wider world, particularly as a legacy of Empire. Famously the Empire Windrush which has become emblematic for an entire generation of post war immigrants docked at Tilbury. Hitherto, ESAH has not taken much part in Black History Month (October), and since one of the two annual issues of the Essex Journal will now be appearing in the autumn, an obvious early move might be to seek an article each year on a Black History theme, for the Autumn EJ.

8.3 Age

ESAH seeks to engage with as wide a range of people as possible, at present the Society's membership is predominantly middle aged or older. Whilst it may be that societies such as ours become more attractive as we age; during the life of this strategy ESAH will consider ways of making its activities attractive to a younger age group. It is likely that 2.5 and 2.6 above will help with that and closer engagement with issues touched on in 6.2 and 7.2 might also be beneficial.

8.4 Disability

ESAH seeks to engage with as wide a range of people as possible. Accordingly, during the life of this strategy, the Society will explore ways to make as full a range of its activities as possible available to anyone who wishes to access them, seeking to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate that.

Good news & bad news: Funding of university courses

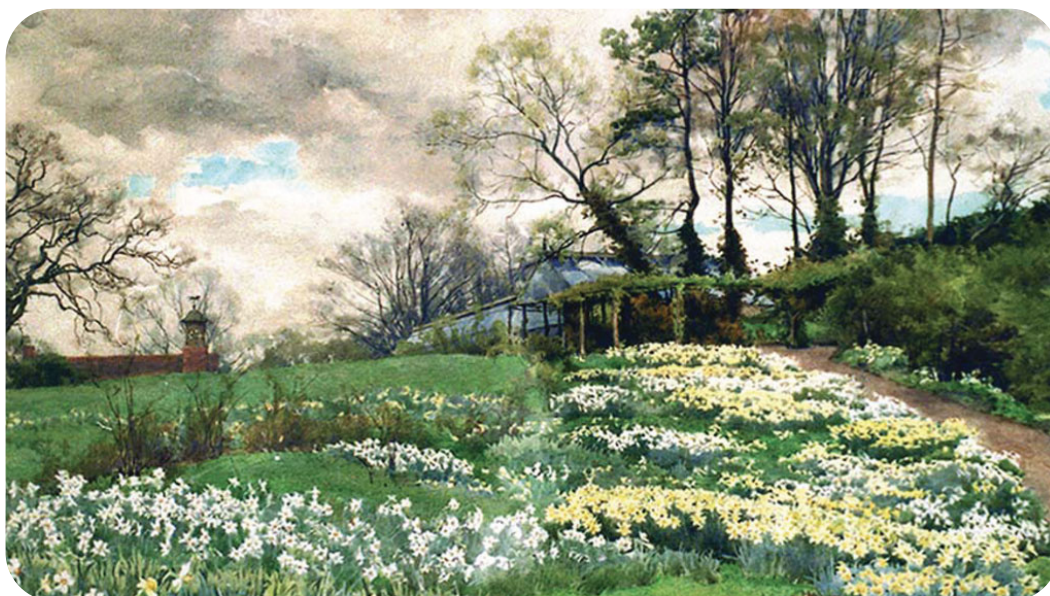
By Nigel Brown

Readers may recall in our last newsletter I provided a link to a letter in the Times which noted the dire consequences of proposed cuts to the funding of university archaeology courses. It's extremely heartening to report that the campaign to prevent such cuts has been successful and the government has recognised the intrinsic educational worth archaeology courses provide, the wide variety of the skills they teach and their transferrable nature, not to mention the economic importance of archaeology. The maintenance of funding levels means that in effect archaeology is regarded as a science subject. Unfortunately, this news appears to have come too late to save the Sheffield University Archaeology Department, and worryingly it looks as though funding of history courses is threatened.

Bad news & good news: Miss Willmott's Garden

By Nigel Brown

ESAH members who are also members of the Essex Gardens Trust (quite a few I imagine) will have seen in the Trust's December newsletter that Miss Willmott's garden has been placed on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. Historic England - Heritage at Risk Register 2021, East of England with, as the register states, "numerous ruinous structures surviving from Willmott's garden needing urgent repairs to save them being lost". However, as the Gardens Trust's newsletter notes for the last forty years the Essex Wildlife Trust have done sterling work in managing the site under lease from the owners and appearing on the Heritage at Risk Register could actually be good news, possibly opening opportunities for much needed funding. For the last two years a visit to Miss Willmott's Garden has been on our Society's programme, but has been thwarted by the pandemic, hopefully this year will be third time lucky.



Watercolour of Ellen Willmott's garden - Alfred Parsons (1847-1920)

Essex seen from elsewhere

By Michael Leach

a) 144 High Street, Maldon. SPAB's unresolved involvement with planning applications for this late medieval timber framed building, with Georgian and nineteenth century alterations, are continuing. Current difficulties involve the brick wall that was inserted in the early C19 as a replacement for the original timber frame, together with the insertion of a large three-part horizontal sliding sash window. The latest proposal is to demolish the brick wall and replace it with a new timber frame on a new sole plate, tenoned and pegged into the surviving mortices in the mid rail at first floor level, and to replace the sliding sash with a conjectural "Tudor" window. The removed sash would be mounted as a functionless feature on its inner face. The SPAB, on the advice of experts, decided that demolition of the structurally sound brick wall was unnecessary as it was not causing problems to the rest of the building, and that it was very much part of the long history of alterations and repairs. It also considered that the removal of the window was structurally unnecessary, and were opposed to the idea of its retention as a functionless feature mounted inside the building. Maldon DC duly rejected the planning application.

b) St Peter on the Wall, Bradwell on Sea. That redoubtable advocate for all that is Essex, Gillian Darley, writes on her gleanings from the SPAB files on the recent history of the building that was St Cedd's church, but had been used as a barn for many centuries. In the late 1940s the architect, Laurence King, with the encouragement of the bishop of Chelmsford, drew up plans for a conjectural restoration of the church to its Saxon form, with the rebuilding of the tripartite arches which had separated nave from the long-lost apsidal chancel, which was also to be reconstructed from scratch. Mercifully, fund raising to start this project was slow, and opposition to the concept was vigorous, led by Maldon's Labour MP, Tom Driberg, and poet and SPAB enthusiast, John Betjeman. Though the surrounding atmospherically remote marsh landscape was to be dramatically altered by Bradwell A nuclear power station, the chapel was saved from intrusive reconstruction and only underwent basic repairs to make it weatherproof, preserving a time-scarred but highly evocative space. It was not till 1959 that it received its deserved Grade I listing.

Though Bradwell A has been decommissioned, the proposal to build Bradwell B nuclear power station still looms, ultimately planning to occupy 100 hectares nearby, with an initial take of 500 hectares for the construction compound and the temporary accommodation for the construction workers.

c) The continuing challenge of how to sympathetically adapt, and to find new uses for closed nonconformist chapels is illustrated by the former URC chapel at Castle Hedingham. Built in 1842, it was probably designed by James Fenton, a Chelmsford based architect and designer of a number of other chapels in Essex and elsewhere. It is listed Grade II* on account of its largely unaltered interior. It was acquired by a builder with plans to insert four new dwellings into the shell, later reduced to two and finally to a single one. This reduction in density should enable a more sympathetic adaptation with retention of some of the features linking it to its historic past.

d) Two more redundant CoE churches i) Holy Trinity, Abridge, 'a small uninteresting chapel of ease' (Bettley & Pevsner) of various dates from 1833 onwards, for adaptation to alternative uses and ii) St Mary, Sturmer, remote from village, basically Norman chancel and nave, C14 tower, C16 brick porch with stepped gable, and a nave roof 'of considerable importance being double hammer-beamed, and an example of decadent carpentry which has needed reinforcing with iron tie rods' (Cecil Hewett).

Sources

The SPAB Magazine, Autumn 2021

Heritage Now, Autumn 2021

Friends of Friendless Churches Newsletter, November 2021

Cider making in Essex

By Michael Leach

Gerry Barnes and Tom Williamson in their new book note that cider was primarily a West Country drink, as this was an area that grew poor malting barley but good apples. The cultivars grown there, specifically selected for cider making, are rarely found in the eastern counties where beer was the dominant drink. Though there is some evidence for cider making in the great houses of east England, and a mix of culinary and dessert apples was used in the absence of the specific cider-making varieties. But at farmhouse level, the authors found little evidence of the necessary equipment.

It is very clear from Essex estate maps that in the seventeenth and eighteenth century there were numerous small orchards attached to farmhouses and buildings of similar status. Doubtless most of the crop was eaten by the households, and any surplus sold locally, but nevertheless there is some evidence that cider was indeed being made in the farmhouse. Though the probate inventories for Writtle and Roxwell make no mention of the drink itself, there are eight entries for cider presses between 1665 and 1734. These would have been of the screw variety, rather than the type used to crush apples for large scale production, consisting of a heavy vertical stone wheel pulled round a circular stone trough by a horse. The Writtle and Roxwell cider presses were usually in a small out-building, such as the brew house or malt house.

Apples, plums and walnuts were occasionally included in these inventories, but it is impossible to establish the value of any of these fruits, as the inventories lump them together with whatever else was stored in the same space, such as lumber, root and other crops, and various items of domestic and farm equipment – even, in one instance, a broken cross bow, young trees and crab stocks for grafting. No cultivars are named, though the two bushels of apples valued in March 1665 in ‘the chamber over the parlor’ must have been one of the long-keeping varieties.

There were national pressures in the mid seventeenth century to adopt cider drinking. In 1653 Ralph Austen pointed out that brewing cider saved significant quantities of fuel by removing the need to make malt or brewing beer. He also suggested that the barley growing land could be put to more productive use. The diarist John Evelyn regarded cider as a superior beverage to imported French wine and, in an appendix to *Sylva*, he provided instructions for the best way to brew the drink. Particularly during the Commonwealth period, growing fruit was seen as an economic, patriotic and religious duty, and in 1662 the Royal Society appointed a committee to establish the best type of apple for cider making.

Though neither Harrison (1587) or Norden (1607) say anything about cider-making in Essex, the limited inventory evidence from Writtle suggests that it was not unknown, and it seems possible that it was being made elsewhere in Essex farmhouses on a small scale during the seventeenth century, particularly in good years when there was a surplus crop of apples for which there would have been no use other than feeding to pigs.

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Christy, M, 1907 ‘Cyder-making’ in *Essex VCH*, ii

Leach, M, 2005 ‘Small rural Essex gardens’ in Way, T, (ed) *Paper Landscapes*, Essex Gardens Trust

Steer, F, 1950 *Farm and Cottage Inventories of Mid Essex 1635-1749*, Essex County Council

Latest news from VCH Essex

By Chris Thornton, Andrew Senter & Ken Crowe

A History of the County of Essex, Volume XII St Osyth to the Naze: North-East Essex Coastal Parishes. Part II The Soken: Kirby-le-Soken, Thorpe-le-Soken and Walton-le-Soken

The first volume (2020) of this two-part work comprised an Introduction, followed by parish histories of St Osyth, Great and Little Clacton, Great Holland, Little Holland and Frinton. The second volume has now been delivered to the publisher Boydell & Brewer and the first proof is expected in February 2022, with an expected publication date sometime during the summer of 2022. It includes a major exploration of the history of the Soken, a significant area of special legal jurisdiction (a liberty or soke) and of administrative and social organization, followed by the first full modern accounts of the large parishes of Kirby-le-Soken, Thorpe-le-Soken and Walton-le-Soken (later the site of the seaside resort of Walton on the Naze). The Soken was owned in the Middle Ages by the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral, London, later passing to lay owners, notably the Catholic-leaning Darcy family of St Osyth priory, the Savage family, and the Earls of Rochford (Nassau de Zuylestein) and their descendants. Before the Norman Conquest the area covered by the soke of St Paul's had once formed a large 'multiple' estate, only gradually developing into separate parishes and manors over the course of the Middle Ages. All three parishes had coastlines bordering Hamford Water or the North Sea, and contain many important marshland nature reserves and SSSI. The London Clay cliffs on the open coast at Walton, especially the large promontory known as the Naze with its cap of Red Crag, form a unique coastal landscape of international geological and biological importance. The Naze served as an important coastal landmark for sailors and a Trinity House navigation tower built in 1720 still stands there.

A History of the County of Essex, Volume XIII Harwich and Dovercourt

Work on the next VCH 'red book' volume is now well underway. Research on the medieval period is almost complete and the first texts are now being drafted. Much work has also been completed on Tudor Harwich, a period for which the sources appear particularly rich. As hard copy publication of the whole work is likely to be some years away, it is planned to place drafts of these accounts on the VCH Essex website pages for comment as we go along.

In 2020 a paperback VCH 'short' on 19th-century Harwich by Dr Andrew Senter was published, with the intention that it would form the core of one chapter covering that period in Volume XIII. The research and publication for the book was supported by generous grants from the VCH Essex Trust and the Essex Heritage Trust. The print-run has now almost sold out with only a few copies remaining in stock (available via the county editor: c.c.thornton@btinternet.com).

Following that successful project, another new VCH Essex project was launched in April 2021, again generously funded by the Essex Heritage Trust and the VCH Essex Trust, to explore the history of Harwich and Dovercourt between 1714–1815. The project is designed to produce another red book chapter for VCH Essex Volume XIII. In advance of Volume XIII's publication, the chapter will be published online in draft form on the VCH Essex website so that it will be freely available for public access and comment. Research has progressed well on documentary sources in the Essex Record Office, the British Library, The National Archives and in local collections in Harwich. The VCH is especially grateful to the Harwich Society and Harwich Town Council who have allowed access to their collections and provided working space, and have helped to promote the VCH project locally. The research, as usual for the VCH, will encompass a very wide range of topics. First drafts of three sections on the 18th century have already been completed, covering Economic History, Social History and Local Government. These are now being revised to take account of the county editor's comments, and in due course will also appear on the VCH Essex website pages. VCH Essex also now has a Facebook page and a Twitter account: <https://www.facebook.com/vchessex> https://twitter.com/Essex_VCH

Southend - the Victorian town and resort

Work/ on a Southend VCH 'short' began some years ago, research being undertaken by a team of volunteers under the guidance of Ken Crowe. Over time the scope of the project has been refined to concentrate on the development of the town and resort in the Victorian period. Using a very wide range of original sources, the volume will examine many aspects of the town's history that have not been previously explored. The building of Cliff Town, the development of the later Victorian estates and their builders; the role of local government and private enterprise in the development of the resort; visitors to Southend and 'social zoning,' and education in the Victorian town – are just some examples. The volume should be completed and ready for publishing by the autumn, in the year in which Southend achieves city status. Research on aspects that cannot be included in this volume, mainly relating to the 20th century, will be posted on the VCH Essex website pages. These will then form the bases for chapters in a future VCH red book on Southend.

Edmund Hickeringill (1631-1708), rector of All Saints, Colchester

By Michael Leach

Richard Newcourt, as notary public and principal registrar to the Diocese of London, was usually dispassionate in his remarks about clergy. However, he was remarkably outspoken about Edmund Hickeringill who, as a virulent critic of church ritual in general, and the episcopacy in particular, had been a thorn in the flesh of Henry Compton, bishop of London. Newcourt, clearly taking the bishop's side in these confrontations, noted 'He was a Man, tho' Episcopally ordain'd, yet publickly bade Defiance to the Prelacy, and that of his own Diocesan in particular; an ignorant, violent, ignorant Fellow, very troublesome, as far as he could, to his Right Reverend Diocesan, and to all that liv'd near him.'

Hickeringill had been prosecuted for 24 charges of barratry at the Chelmsford Assizes in March 1681, before the notorious Judge Jeffreys. He vigorously conducted his own defence and succeeded in getting the jury to return a 'not guilty' verdict. Three months later, he was before the Court of Arches for marrying couples without banns or licence, a particularly sensitive matter with his bishop for whom clandestine marriages were a constant preoccupation. Hickeringill again conducted his own defence, but this time insisted in doing so in the Greek language. When finally persuaded to speak in English, he was very unflattering about the court, declaiming that 'even the vilest and worst of God's creatures has something good in it, saving [this] Court which never did any good, or ever would'. The court suspended him from office for three years. Further trouble followed soon after, when Hickeringill was reported to have described his bishop as a 'bold, daring and impudent... and ignorant man.' He was alleged to have aggravated his offensive remarks by stating that he could prove Compton's involvement in the Popish Plot to assassinate the monarch – a highly provocative suggestion in 1681. Compton sued for scandalum magnatum under a statute of Richard II which made it an offence to defame a prelate or a duke, and was represented in court by Judge Jeffreys who had an old score to settle with Hickeringill who was fined the crippling sum of £2000. This obliged him to make a grovelling and humiliating apology in the Court of Arches in order to escape financial ruin.

A contrasting view of Hickeringill comes from John Dunton (1659-1732) who wrote in 1705 'his wit is excellent, of which he has given the world an undeniable specimen, in his Character of the Ceremony-Monger. His humour is good and pleasant. He is his own lawyer, the treasury of knowledge, the oracle of counsel, and his talent that way has been very serviceable to many. He is a man of bold spirit. He wrote for me The Divine Captain, and often did me the honour to invite me down to his noble seat in Essex.' It is not surprising to learn that Dunton, though nominally an Anglican, had strong nonconformist sympathies and significantly, at the end of his life, was buried in the dissenters' cemetery at Bunhill Fields. In life, he was a London publisher and bookseller and, in 1705, the author of one of the earliest autobiographies, entitled *The Life & Errors of John Dunton, Citizen of London*. This contains useful information about those involved in the contemporary London book trade.

It is not clear why Edmund Hickeringill corresponded with the Yorkshire antiquary, Ralph Thoresby (1658-1725) to whom he sent an account of his life and writings, though Thoresby was acquainted with Hickeringill's brother in Leeds, a dealer in rape seed and black wares. It would be interesting to know what Edmund had to say about himself and whether this account (if it has survived) provides additional information not found in his autobiography. Thoresby simply recorded that he was 'a noted writer of Colchester' though the nineteenth century editor of the diary cautiously added that 'Thoresby's extreme good-nature leads him to bestow his laudatory epithets a little too indiscriminately' – a somewhat oblique criticism!

Sources

Carpenter, E, 1956 *The Protestant Bishop: being the Life of Henry Compton*, Longmans Green & Co

Hunter, J (ed) 1830 *The Diary of Ralph Thoresby*, i, London, p.250

Newcourt, R, 1711 *Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Londinense*. ii, London

Book Review

An Account of Daniel Quare 1648-1724: Clockmaker of Exchange Alley, London & his Descendants from 1734-1903, who were Farmers at Matching, Essex

By Michael Leach

Patrick Streeter: Matching Press (2020). ISBN: 978-0-9518664-8-1. 80 Pages, illustrated, hardback.

This is a handsomely produced and well-illustrated book, the first part of which touches lightly on the career of the seventeenth century London clockmaker, and the attempts of his clients to retrieve their lost or stolen watches, readily identifiable from their recorded serial numbers. The second part traces Daniel Quare's farming and merchant descendants in Matching over the next two centuries, and will be of interest to the relevant family historians, and those interested in the village life of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There is also a detailed account of the theft of malt from a Harlow maltings, and the forensic evidence collected by the police. The author provides extensive family trees to enable the reader to navigate easily through the various branches of the family.

For an outsider the most engaging part of the book is an appendix which describes the picaresque adventures of a Scotsman's maritime and terrestrial brigandage. He formed a trading partnership with a female pickpocket and forger, leading to the theft of another Quare watch, and further violent alcohol-fuelled robberies. After betrayal, and an attempt to escape by enlisting with the crew of a privateer, he was delivered into the hands of justice by an on-board mutiny, imprisoned in Newgate gaol and tried at the Old Bailey. His death sentence was commuted to transportation for 14 years but his career thereafter is not recorded. His extramarital activities probably saved the life of his female accomplice who, in court for forging a will, 'pleaded her belly' (i.e. she was pregnant), and thereby escaped the gallows, following her erstwhile partner into transportation. It is not clear if their partnership continued in exile.

Though indexed, no references (apart from an occasional footnote) are provided, an unfortunate omission as it is clear that a good deal of research has been done by the author, some of which must have come from newspaper reports of the period.

The Gentleman's *History of Essex*

Looking for a good home are i) volume 1, covering the Chelmsford, Witham and part of Hinckford hundreds and published in 1769/70, lacking engravings (apart from the frontispiece), untrimmed and ragged but otherwise complete, and now secure in modern professional hardback cloth binding and ii) volume 6, covering Colchester, Lexden and part of Tendring hundreds, in a hardback modern reproduction of legible quality, published 2012, and including copies of engravings folded in, plus the index to all six volumes of this *History of Essex*. Both free if collected from Ongar, otherwise cost of postage only.

Email Michael Leach on leach1939@yahoo.co.uk.

Monumental Brass Society

in association with the Essex Society for Archaeology & History

Saffron Walden, Essex. Saturday 16th July 2022.

The church of St. Mary the Virgin at Saffron Walden is one of Essex's largest churches, with a total length of nearly sixty-two metres, occupying a commanding position above the streets of the quaint market town. The present Perpendicular building was begun in the late 15th century with the spire added in 1832.

The church contains a very interesting collection of ten brasses ranging in date from c.1430 to 1619. The majority were returned from Audley End House in 1901 by Charles Cornwallis, 5th Baron Braybrooke and mounted on the north aisle wall. A brass inscription records the fact (LSW.XX). David Lepine, our Hon. Editor, will focus on the two 15th century clerical brasses. The earliest dated c.1430 depicts a priest in mass vestments with an unusual device of a pelican in piety renewed in 1901 (see illustration overleaf). The building also contains twenty-one indents many of which pave the floor of the south chapel.

The one outstanding monument by Cornelius Harman commemorates Thomas Lord Audley who died in 1544. The black touchstone tomb is a rare example of the provincial influence of Henry VII's Italian memorial in Westminster Abbey. David Carrington, the renowned conservator from the Skillington Workshop, will share his knowledge of the tomb and explain the proposals to move it from the south chapel to the north side.

Programme

- 2.00pm. **Welcome**
By Martin Stuchfield, President of the Monumental Brass Society
- 2.05pm. ***The medieval town of Saffron Walden***
By Liz Allan
- 2.35pm. ***'He fed his sheep well': the clerical brasses of St. Mary's, Saffron Walden***
By David Lepine
- 3.00pm. Tea & viewing of the brasses
- 3.30pm. ***The tomb of Thomas Lord Audley, Lord Chancellor, 1544***
By David Carrington

The Church will be open prior to the meeting and all are welcome.

The meeting is free with no booking required.

The church of St. Mary the Virgin is situated in Church Path, Saffron Walden. The postcode for satellite navigation is CB10 1JP. The nearest station is Audley End (served from London: Liverpool Street) which is 3 miles distant representing an approximate journey of 10 minutes by taxi.

Membership

Subscriptions are due 1st January each year as follows:

Single Member - £25

Family Membership - £30

Student - £15

Associate Member - £15

Institutions - £25

Associate Institutions - £25

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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.

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 all 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 a 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 Howard Brooks or Victoria Rathmill.

Programme of Meetings 2022

Wednesday 16th March

A visit to Miss Willmott's garden at Warley Place near Brentwood.

The main part of the garden is wheelchair accessible. **£10** (to include a donation).

Miss Willmott (1858-1934) was described by Gertrude Jekyll as 'the greatest living woman gardener'. She served on a number of RHS committees as the only female, winning the RHS Medal of Honour in 1907 and was the first woman elected to the Linnean Society. Her 50-acre garden in Essex drew visitors from around Europe with its 100,000 plant and tree species and its on-acre Alpine Valley. Daffodils were her passion and she had over 600 different species, which she protected from thieves with booby traps and a revolver. The garden is now derelict and is a nature reserve cared for by Essex Wildlife Trust. The daffodils still bloom in spring and we hope to visit the garden at the height of its wild beauty. We will take a guided tour led by a local volunteer.

Wednesday 27th April

Boxted Airfield Museum. 2.30

Tea and cakes followed by a private tour around the exhibits **£8**.

Friday 20th May

Tour of Rainham Hall (National Trust). Free to NT members, others **£5**.

Saturday 25th June

AGM, University of Essex

Saturday 1st October

Industrial Heritage Fair, Silver End Village Hall

Saturday 5th November

Symposium, Christ Church, Chelmsford

Saturday 12th November

EIAG Annual Meeting

If you wish to attend events, please email Excursions Secretary on howard000brooks@gmail.com. All other details such as payment and location details will follow.

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 not 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 news will be distributed electronically. **If you have an email address will you please email it to our Membership Secretary, Martin Stuchfield, at martinstuchfield@pentlowhall.uk**