

SPRING 2026, ISSUE 204

# Newsletter

*Essex Society for Archaeology and History*



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## In this issue

Library Committee Report

Mistley Torc goes on display

Charles Head - Perhaps not so mysterious

Update on the second family of John Mildmay of Chelmsford and Cretingham

Notable quern fragments at St Marys Church, Salcott

Holey Pots

Hope for the ash tre

ERO Celebration

ESAH Events for 2026

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**Copy for the next issue should be sent to the editor at the above address by no later than 17<sup>th</sup> July 2026.**

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The illustration on the front cover: East Mersea Church  
(Photo: © Philip Wise)

Registered Charity no. 213218

ISSN 0305-8530

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# Library Committee report for 2025

The library committee met in March, July and October. The main purpose of this committee is to ensure that the ESAH collection of books and periodicals which have been collected over the past 175 years is correctly stored and accessible to members at the University of Essex. In addition we buy a number of books each year, undertake to review some of them and sometimes accept gifts and legacies of books for accession to the library collection. We are grateful for the work of Sarah Demolo at the university who ensures the safety of all the special collections there. The collection is accessible to members provided they book in advance and take proof of membership with them on the day.

At each library committee meeting the usual business was transacted to do with choosing, receiving and buying books for the collection. The following books were purchased. Five more titles are on the list to be purchased.

Mercer, I. and Mercer, R., 2022. *Essex Rock: Geology beneath the Landscape* (Exeter: Pelagic Publishing)

Farley, J.M.A. and Joy, J.P. (eds), 2024. *The Snettisham Hoards* (British Museum Research Report 225) (London: British Museum).

Knight, M., Ballantyne, R., Brudenell, M.J., Cooper, A., Gibson, D., and Robinson Zeki, I., 2024. *Must Farm Pile-dwelling Settlement: Volume 1. Landscape, Architecture and Occupation* (Cambridge: Macdonald Institute for Archaeological Research)

Hart, G., 2024. *Proceedings against the 'Scandalous Ministers' of Essex, 1644-1645* (Church of England Record Society 28) (Martlesham: Boydell and Brewer)

Rotherham, I.D. and Moody, J.A. (eds), 2024. *Countryside History: The Life and Legacy of Oliver Rackham* (London: Pelagic Publishing).

The committee members also discussed a range of other topics at their meetings such as the progress of book reviews which, thanks to a database compiled by Paul Sealey, has become much more efficiently trackable. We also considered improving accessibility to the collection at the university and the future of the Essex Record Office. These discussions are minuted by the secretary, Paul Sealey, and drawn to Council's attention.

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# The Mistley Torc goes on display at Colchester Castle

By Philip J Wise

In a previous issue of the Newsletter, it was reported that the Society, along with two other Essex heritage bodies, had contributed to the funding required to acquire the Mistley Torc. This exceptionally rare find was made by a metal detectorist in October 2019 on farmland at Mistley, near Manningtree in north Essex (Treasure Case: 2019 T1143). It is a fragment of a gold neck ring, or torc, comprising one terminal (or end) and a length of twisted metal which represents probably less than half of the original hoop. The object dates to the Middle Bronze Age, around 1275-1140 BC. This type of neck ring is found in the south of England, including in East Anglia with three examples known from Norfolk. In Essex however gold metalwork from the Bronze Age is very rare.

The Mistley Torc has recently gone on show at Colchester Castle as part of a temporary exhibition of Bronze Age gold finds from Essex. These include the Woodham Walter Hoard of three torc fragments, thought to be part of a metalworker's hoard, found near Maldon by a metal detectorist in 1991.

The acquisition by Colchester Museums of the Mistley Torc was made possible by grants from the Friends of Colchester Museums, the Essex Society for Archaeology and History and the Manningtree Local History and Museum Society.



*The Mistley Torc (© Colchester and Ipswich Museums)*

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# Charles Head – Perhaps not so ‘mysterious’ an Essex artist after all

By Philip J Wise

In the last issue of the Newsletter I published an article entitled ‘Philip Morant’s portrait and the mysterious Mr Head’ which led to two members getting in touch with further information. As a result, I was encouraged to write a further article looking at Charles Head’s work as an artist and his links with the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould.

To recap, Charles Head was born in Portsmouth in 1850 and studied at the National Art Training School (now the Royal College of Art), probably between 1875 and 1877. His first Essex address was on Mersea Island where he became acquainted with the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924). He later moved to Colchester where he remained until his death in 1926 at the age of 76. Head was a painter, designer and calligrapher whose work is represented in the collections of Colchester Museums.

There is no doubt that Charles Head enjoyed a successful career as a professional artist. This can be shown by the addresses where he was living in Colchester during the latter part of his career as evidenced in the 1891, 1901 and 1911 censuses. In the early 1890s he was living at 43 Crowhurst Road which, as recorded on a date stone, was newly built in 1885 as Hawthorn Place. In 1901 the census data shows that Head had moved next door to no. 45, part of Kingston Terrace, which is a slightly larger property. Finally by 1911 he had moved from a terraced house to a semi-detached property at 32 Creffield Road, a more prestigious location close to Colchester Royal Grammar School. This final move may have been made possible as a result of the fact that Head began to work in 1909 for the architect Temple Lushington Moore (1856-1920).



Charles Head’s portrait of the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould (Photo: © Colchester City Council: Colchester & Ipswich Museums. COLEM:196A)

Temple Moore is described in his ‘Dictionary of National Biography’ entry as ‘England’s leading ecclesiastical architect from the mid-Edwardian years’. Although his practice was based in London, Moore’s work can be found throughout England. Head worked on some 51 projects for Moore, all painted decoration of woodwork designed by the architect or his daughter Mary. These included churches in Hampshire, Northumberland and Yorkshire. For example, at St James, Heckmondwike (West Yorkshire) in 1912 Head worked on the painted reredos, or ornamental screen covering the wall behind an altar; whilst at St Wilfrid, Harrogate (North Yorkshire) he was employed on the painted decoration of a rood beam, c. 1914, and the pulpit, c. 1916-17. In Essex, Temple Moore only worked on two churches: St Mary the Virgin, Radwinter (restoration and fittings, 1886-92) and St James, Clacton-on-Sea (1912-13). But Head did not start working for Moore until 1909 so cannot have been employed at Radwinter and St James’s was unfinished, so there is probably none of his work there either.

In his church work Head was joined by his eldest son Mark, also known as Marcus (c. 1886-1915) and hence he is credited as ‘Head & Son of Colchester’. This is the case, for example, with St Mary’s, Lowgate, Hull where the reredos is described as being coloured by this company name in 1912. Eventually two more of Head’s sons would join the family firm: Ernest (1895-1974) and Richard (b. c. 1896).



East Mersea Church (Photo: © Philip Wise)

The starting point for considering Head's relationship with the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould is the latter's portrait. Head painted this work, measuring 50 inches (127 cm) high by 40 inches (101.6 cm) wide, in 1911. There is no evidence that this portrait was commissioned and it may be that it was produced by Head out of affection for Baring-Gould. In a newspaper interview, Head refers to his close friendship with Baring-Gould which commenced when he was living on Mersea Island in the 1870s and Baring-Gould was the rector of East Mersea between 1871 and 1881.

Baring-Gould refers to his time on Mersea Island in the second volume of his autobiography 'Further Reminiscences 1864-1894'. It was not a happy period in his life. He was oppressed by the constant noise of the wind blowing around the island and did not take to his parishioners. Baring-Gould wrote, 'The Essex peasants were dull, shy, reserved and suspicious, I never managed to understand them, nor they to understand me.' Worse still, 'My impression was that generations [of Mersea Islanders] afflicted with these complaints [ague and rheumatism], acquired in the marshes, had lowered the physique and the mental development of the islanders.' Unfortunately for Baring-Gould there were no resident gentry in the parish and he complained that none ever visited, which was at least partly because 'Mersea was very inaccessible ... the road [to Colchester] was excruciating bad in winter ...'. Starved of intellectual conversation the rector may have been drawn to Charles Head as a man of education and artistic accomplishment. The fruits of this friendship were the illustrations produced by Head for Baring-Gould's magnum opus 'The Lives of the Saints' published in sixteen volumes between 1871 and 1877.

Perhaps most telling of all as evidence of the connection is the letter written by Sabine Baring-Gould to Charles Head on 16th February 1923 (see Appendix). This is a very personal and affectionate letter revealing much about its author's personal circumstances and state of mind. In it, Baring-Gould describes spending his 89th birthday in bed because of ill health and the difficulties in his relationship with his son Edward and his American wife. Written towards the end of Baring-Gould's life and more than fifty years after he first met Head this document demonstrates the length and intensity of their friendship.

Charles Head is certainly no longer mysterious. He is, however, perhaps not as well-known as he should be, at least in Essex. As we have seen, Head worked for several years for one of the leading church architects in England and was a close friend of an eminent Victorian. Perhaps in the centenary year of his death he deserves a blue plaque on one of the house where he lived in Colchester?

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**Appendix: Transcript of a letter from Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould to Mr Charles Head, written at Lew Trenchard, Devon on 16th February 1923 (quoted in Wawman 2010)**

Dear Mr. Head,

Thank you so much for your letter. It was my 89th birthday on Jan. 28th, and my entry into my 90th year. I spent the day in bed to which I have been confined for 3 weeks. I am only now emancipated from it, and I got out yesterday and the day before for a short time. I have given up my house and household to my eldest son and his American wife, or rather they have been taken from me, as they supposed me to be too old and infirm to be able to manage them myself. The change is not altogether to my liking, but I have to submit to it. American ways of thought and habits are so foreign and distasteful to me.

I should dearly like to see you here, but I dare not ask leave for any friends to come to me, as all sorts of objections would be raised. I do not suppose that my time here can be much prolonged, and I shall not be sorry to go to my great Master and Lord and to meet again the dear ones I have lost.

I remain,  
Yours truly,  
S. Baring-Gould

#### **Acknowledgements**

I am greatly indebted to Dr James Bettley and John Allen for writing to me with their thoughts on Charles Head after my initial article. The information on Head's work as an artist presented here is based on their research.

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Wawman, R. 2010 'The Last Thirty Years of The Life of Sabine Baring-Gould as revealed by Correspondence with Others'. *Trans Sabine Baring-Gould Appreciation Society*, vol. 10, pp. 31- 50.

# Update on the Second Family of John Mildmay of Chelmsford and Cretingham

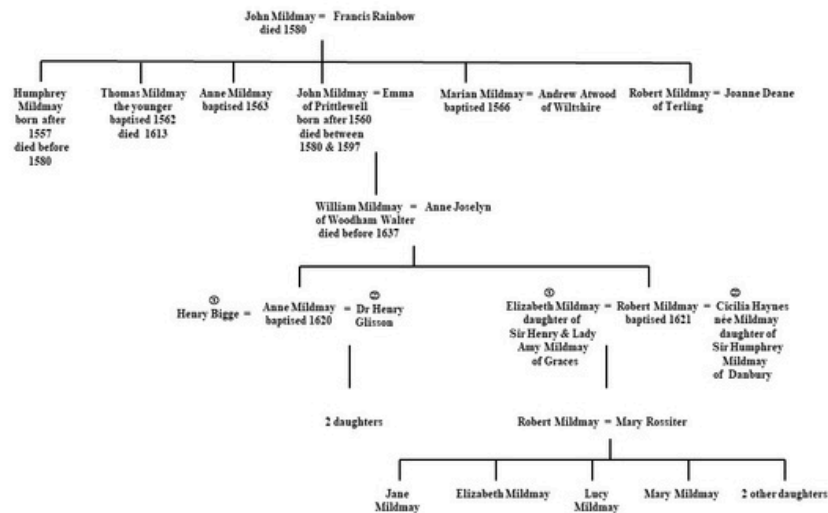
By Peter Wynn

In the May 2024 issue I presented an account of the families of John Mildmay. In this I drew attention to the conflicting information from the Herald's Visitations of 1612 and 1634 concerning the identity of John's second wife. The 1612 account identified her as Jane Browne née Alington, the widow of Thomas Browne [of Cold Norton] whilst the 1634 one had his second wife as Frances Rainbow of Ipswich.

I have subsequently found a further account by John Bennett Boddie which drew attention to the will of Sir Giles Alington of Horseheath which named his son in law as Henry Mildmay. I have checked the will and confirm that Boddie correctly reported the content of the will. Boddie suggested that this Henry was the brother of John. Boddie appears to have erred here: there is no mention of a son, Henry, in the will of John's father, Thomas. A more likely candidate is Henry, the son of John's brother, Thomas. This Henry was left the manor of Great Leighs by his father. This is compatible with Crisp's pedigree of the Alington family which stated that the Henry who married Jane Browne née Alington was of Great Leighs.

I have also found records of baptisms at St Mary le Tower, Ipswich for Thomas, Anne and Marion, offspring of John and Frances. This is the only reference I have come across to the daughter, Anne.

The further information has enabled me to prepare a revised version of the chart of John Mildmay's second family.



## Sources

- John Bennett Boddie (1954) Virginia Historical Families Pacific Coast Publishers p. 232.
- Frederick A. Crisp (ed.) (1907) Notes to the Visitation of England and Wales Vol. 7 p. 24.
- Will of Sir Giles Alington of Horseheath, 1586 (National Archives PROB 11/69/523).
- Will of Thomas Mildemaye of Chelmsford, 1550 (ERO D/ABW 25/92).
- Will of Thomas Myldmay of Moulsham, 1566 (National Archives PROB 11/49/30).

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# Notable Quern Fragments at St Mary's Church, Salcott: Connecting the Roman Landscape

By Paul Rowe

Even small village churches can reveal unexpected glimpses of Roman Essex. During a recent walk from Tollesbury to Old Hall Marshes for a spot of birdwatching, I continued on across the fields to Salcott and paused at St Mary's Church. With hobbies in both local history and geology, and as a member of the Essex Rock and Mineral Society, I often find myself examining the fabric of church walls, which can act as small exhibitions of the surrounding landscape. Medieval builders frequently reused whatever durable material lay to hand, and those choices sometimes preserve much earlier stories in stone. At St Mary's I identified a notable cluster of Roman quern fragments incorporated into the tower and wall masonry. Together they represent an instructive example of reused Roman material within an Essex church.

## The Romano-British Puddingstone Quern

Set into the north wall is a fragment of Hertfordshire puddingstone that displays a clearly worked and smoothed grinding face. The flat, burnished surface, worn through repeated rotary grinding, indicates that this was once part of a Romano-British household quern used for processing cereals such as wheat or barley. The pebbled surface still reflects light, its polish the result of sustained use.

Hertfordshire puddingstone is a silcrete conglomerate formed approximately 55 million years ago within the Reading Beds. Flint pebbles, originally derived from the Chalk and rounded in ancient beach environments, were later cemented by silica-rich groundwater percolating through the gravels. This process produced an exceptionally hard, glass-like matrix. Because the flint clasts and the surrounding silica cement are of comparable hardness, fractures tend to pass directly through the pebbles rather than around them, contributing to the stone's durability and suitability for grinding.

The embedded clasts display marked variation in colour, including white and grey quartz, red and brown iron-stained flints, black organic-rich chert, and occasional greenish glauconitic or volcanic fragments. The principal quarry sources were in Hertfordshire and the Chilterns, where archaeological evidence suggests organised Roman extraction and production. Puddingstone querns were widely distributed across Roman East Anglia, often in the conical East Anglian form associated with efficient rotary milling.

Fragments of unworked puddingstone are not uncommon in Essex churches. However, a fragment that clearly exhibits a worked grinding face is exceptional, and may be the only example currently identified in the county's church buildings.

## The Travelling Stones: Mayen Lava

Two fragments of Mayen lava are also visible, one in the south-facing base of the tower and another incorporated into a north buttress. This vesicular volcanic rock originates in the Eifel region of Germany and was extensively exported across the Roman Empire. In Britain it became an important material for querns, in many areas supplementing or replacing locally sourced stones such as puddingstone.



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Mayen lava was valued for both its durability and its self-sharpening qualities. Its vesicular structure helped maintain an effective grinding surface over prolonged use, making it suitable for domestic and small-scale industrial milling. Large-scale quarrying in the Eifel supplied much of Roman Britain, and in many areas imported lava gradually supplanted local puddingstone as a more economical alternative from the mid-1st century AD onwards. Once worn out, lava querns were frequently reused in construction. Comparable examples of incorporated Mayen fragments can be seen in other Essex churches, including St Mary's, Broomfield.

Their presence at Salcott reflects participation in established Roman trade networks linking continental Europe with settlements in southeast Britain.



### Dolerite and Glacial Transport

At the north base of the tower, behind the iron lighting strip, is a substantial block of dolerite. Dolerite was used in Roman Britain for querns, millstones, whetstones, and other durable tools. Major British sources include the Whin Sill complex of northern England, which was quarried in antiquity and used in a variety of Roman construction and industrial contexts.

In Essex, dolerite more commonly occurs as glacial erratics transported southward during the Anglian glaciation approximately 450,000 years ago. Such erratics are often heavily iron-stained and weathered. The example at St Mary's appears comparatively fresh and exhibits a flat, smooth face. While it may represent a naturally incorporated erratic, the possibility of human modification cannot be excluded and warrants recording.



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## The Roman Landscape of Salcott and Tollesbury

St Mary's stands within a landscape demonstrably active during the Roman period. Salcott lies approximately two miles north of Tollesbury, linked across fields and Old Hall Marshes by footpaths still in use today. Old Hall Marshes, a short walk south of the church, contains a notable concentration of red hills, with around thirteen recorded examples. These low mounds of briquetage and fired clay debris are associated with Iron Age and Roman salt production and form part of the wider coastal salt-working landscape of the Blackwater Estuary.

Excavations over many years at Tollesbury have revealed cremations, urned burials, pottery, and further briquetage, confirming substantial Roman occupation and organised salt production there. More recent archaeological investigations in advance of housing development at Carrington's Farm and its surrounds, less than two miles south of Salcott, have added further clarity. These works have identified a Romano-British cemetery with numerous burials and cremations, cropmarks consistent with a possible villa complex, and the excavated remains of a second- to mid-third-century farmstead comprising ditches, pits and postholes. The farmstead appears to have formed part of a wider, organised agricultural estate linked to burial grounds and settlement activity in its immediate vicinity, a working landscape in which the daily processing of grain, "the daily bread," would have been as routine as stock management or ditch maintenance.

Closer still to St Mary's, nineteenth-century investigations recorded the foundations of a Roman building approximately 240 metres to the south-east of the church, while a further red hill to the east indicates additional salt-working debris characteristic of Roman coastal industry. The navigable Salcott Creek would have provided direct access to the Blackwater Estuary and onward maritime trade routes, facilitating the movement of agricultural produce, salt, and other goods.

Taken together, this is not an isolated scatter of finds but a coherent and structured Roman landscape: salt production along the marsh edge, farmsteads and probable estate centres inland, burial grounds marking settled communities, and creek access tying the whole into wider exchange networks. Within such a setting, the presence of quern fragments and dolerite in the fabric of St Mary's sits comfortably. The church also incorporates fragments of Roman brick within its buttresses, a feature common in many north Essex churches, where Roman tile and brick were readily reused, yet here, alongside the quern stones, they reinforce the impression that worked Roman material was locally available rather than brought from afar. These are the ordinary working elements of an agricultural and processing economy that was clearly established in the immediate hinterland.

Although the church itself was built many centuries later, the puddingstone quern fragment, the imported Mayen lava, and the dolerite block together form a small but telling concentration of Roman material within a single rural church. While individual elements such as puddingstone blocks appear at sites like St Botolph's Priory in Colchester or St Mary with St Leonard in Broomfield, and Mayen lava fragments have been noted in Broomfield's tower, no other documented Essex church combines these three materials in such close proximity. This unique grouping potentially marks St Mary's as a key point of interest for understanding the practicalities and networks of local Roman life. Reused in medieval construction, these stones offer tangible evidence of domestic processing, coastal production, long-distance exchange, and the quiet continuity of material reuse across centuries in this corner of Essex.

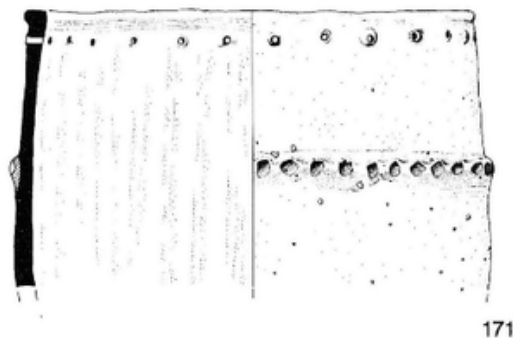
Modest in scale yet archaeologically significant, they quietly testify to the ingenuity, trade, and daily life of a closely settled and interconnected Roman landscape, making St Mary's a uniquely revealing site in Essex.

# Holey Pots

By Nigel Brown

There are many examples of large pots, bucket urns and globular urns excavated from cemetery and settlement sites from across Essex. These pots characteristic of the Middle Bronze Age, broadly dating to the second half of the second millennium BC, are generally known as Deverel-Rimbury ceramics (named after two sites in Dorset). They often have perforations through the vessel walls; such perforations also occur on pottery of earlier and later periods but not as frequently as they do on Deverel-Rimbury pots.

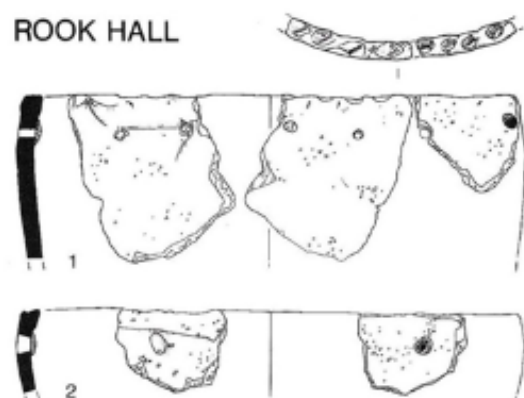
The perforations are broadly of two types; firstly, neat cylindrical holes made through the vessel wall before firing and occurring as rows of holes below the rim of the pot. As in number 171 below a pot from Colchester (Brown 1999, fig. 78.171).

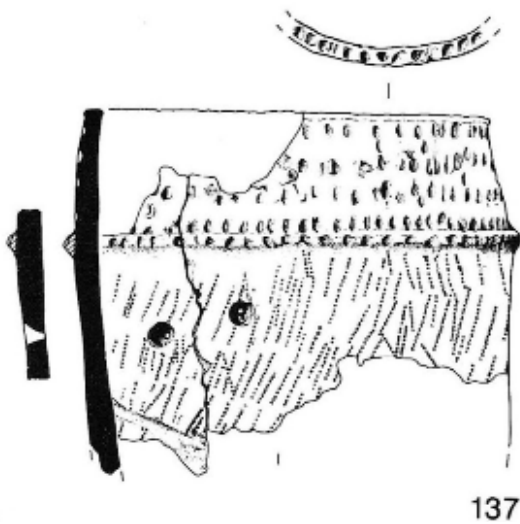


These holes are generally considered to have been a way of fixing a leather or fabric lid, tied on or secured with pegs. Conceivably some of the pots may have been used as drums, ceramic drums are quite widely made and used in parts of Africa and Asia. It is also possible that pre-firing perforations were used for decorative effect as in this photograph of a modern pot from Africa. The vessel is of similar size and shape to Deverel-Rimbury urns, and has pre-firing perforations below the rim, which here occur in pairs rather than a continuous row and have been used to secure decorative beads tied on with raffia.

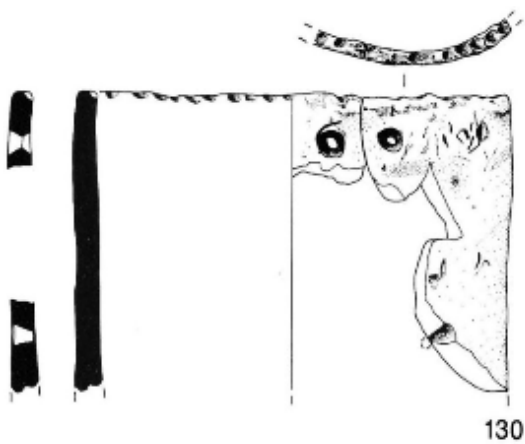


Rather harder to explain are the perforations on rim sherds of bucket urns from Rook Hall (Adkins et al 1984-5). There some of the holes in a row of pre-firing perforations below the rim have been blocked off by the addition of lumps of clay inside the pot. This would have left a continuous row of perforations visible from the outside but only some completely piercing the vessel, quite what purpose that might have served is difficult to guess.

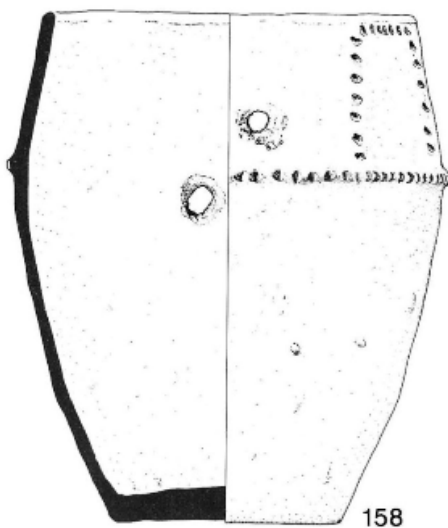




The second type of perforation were made after firing and are generally conical in shape drilled through the wall from the outside, they most often occur in pairs either side of a crack, the example here is from White Colne (Fig. 137 Brown 1999, fig.73.137). They seem clearly to be repair holes enabling the pot to be tied together to continue in use (though presumably not for storing liquids). Occasionally the holes are 'hourglass' shaped having been drilled through from inside and outside the pot as in another example from White Colne (Fig.130 Brown 1999, fig. 71.130) they normally occur toward the top of the pot, trying to drill a hole lower down the inside of a vessel would have been very awkward.



Occasionally these repair holes were used not just to bind together cracks, but to effect more extensive repairs. A globular urn from a cremation cemetery at Simons Ground in Dorset had a large part of the lower wall missing (White 1982, plate 13, fig 24.7). The resulting gap in the vessel wall was ringed with perforations so that a leather or fabric 'patch' could be attached. More locally the base of a large (base diameter 240mm), thick-walled urn from Elms Farm (Brown 2001, fig. 16.47) had become ditched and holes had been drilled all around its circumference so that it could be 'stitched' back on. The effort that has been made to repair these pots clearly indicates that they were valued or, at the very least, could not be easily replaced.



Another pot from White Colne Fig. 158 (Brown 1999, fig.77.158) has an altogether more remarkable pair of holes. They occur on 'opposite' sides of the vessel, one above the other below finger impressed shoulder cordon. They appear to have been caused by a long narrow object smashed through the pot at an angle. It's tempting to think it might have been one of the narrow bladed swords typical of the Middle Bronze Age, though there's no real indication as to what was used to inflict the damage. The action appears to have been a ritual 'killing' of the pot indicating that these vessels and/or their contents could have meanings beyond the mundane. Indeed, that is something a range of other evidence indicates (e.g. Brown 1995, 127; Brown 1999, 81) a reminder that in prehistory, what appear to us to be ordinary household objects could carry meaning well beyond their apparent utilitarian function.

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**Sources:**

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## Hope for the ash tree

By Michael Leach

Ash dieback, caused by *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, has been seen as a serious threat to this tree, both in Britain and in Europe, with no remedy available. Millions of trees have already died in this country but it now appears that natural resistance may be developing. Each mature ash tree produces in the order of 10,000 genetically distinct seeds annually by sexual reproduction, with the possibility that a favourable resistant mutation may emerge. As ash dieback is a slow killer, there is a strong argument for leaving diseased trees standing to allow them to continue to produce an annual crop of seed, thereby keeping the available gene pool as large as possible and favouring the chance of the production of a resistant mutation.

This is the opposite of the approach to Dutch elm disease. The elm does not set seed in this country, but spreads by vegetative root sucker which produces an exact genetic replica of the parent, denying any opportunity for a beneficial variation. The only hope for controlling Dutch elm disease was the felling and destruction of infected trees as quickly as possible in an attempt to prevent its spread. Anyone who has lived in Essex since the 1970s will know that this approach was a complete failure.

The future of the ash is not yet guaranteed, and further careful work will be needed before this tree is secure in our landscape.

**Source:**

*The Guardian*, 27 June 2025

# ERO Celebration – ‘The Storehouse of Essex History’

By Philip J Wise

On the 25th October last year, I represented the Society at the celebrations making the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Essex Record Office. The event also marked the fact that the Friends of Historic Essex has been supporting the ERO and local history in Essex for 70 years. The building was thronged with users and supporters of the ERO who were treated to a series of short presentations in the lecture theatre.

Jenny Butler, the Chair of the Friends of Historic Essex, described the early days of what would become the ERO by recalling its origins in 1785 when the first list of county records, including the Quarter Session Records, was drawn up. Over the years the records were stored in various locations in Chelmsford, including surprisingly in the House of Correction. In the past it could also be a costly business to inspect the records; in 1908 there was a charge of 1 shilling an hour. The ERO in its present form dates to 25th May 1939 when new accommodation was opened in County Hall. Inevitably space would eventually begin to run out and, although stop gap measures were put in place, by the 1990s the situation was becoming desperate.

Vic Gray, a former County Archivist, took up the story. In 1996, the decision was taken to build the present ERO at Wharf Road. Remarkably, at a very late stage the size of the Search Room was doubled by extending the building outwards. There were exactly two years between the cutting of the first sod in October 1997 and the transfer of the first records in October 1999. The building opened to the public in March the following year.

A user of the Record Office, Claire Driver, then spoke of her research into the archives associated with North Primary School in Colchester. These include an entry in the school log book for 23rd July 1915 which recorded the hanging ‘in the Hall [of] a Roll of Honour of all our old boys who are serving with H.M. Forces by sea or land’ (ERO E/ML 86/2).

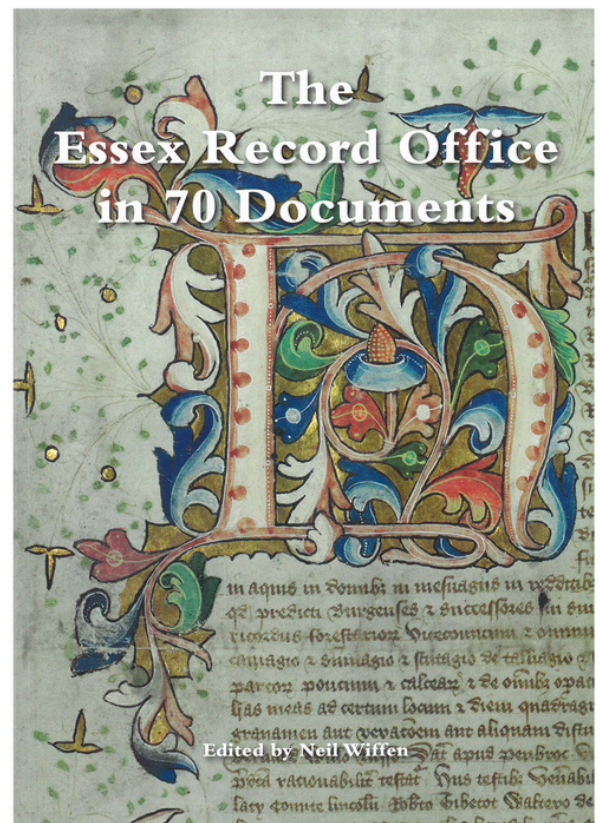
Martin Astell, the current Record Office Manager, reminded us that the ERO does not just collect parchment and paper but also sound recordings. He played an extract from a mixtape of recordings by bands featuring ‘Nelson’ and recordings by bands from Colchester and the surrounding area, c.1983 (ERO SA265) – an unexpected side, at least to me, of the work of the ERO.

The final contribution was from the President of the Friends of Historic Essex, as well as being the ESAH patron, Lord Petre. In an accomplished and amusing speech, Lord Petre warned of the risk of the ERO being neglected in the process of Local Government Reorganisation and that, in his view, it was not really suitable for re-organisation or delegation to a new unitary authority. He therefore warmly welcomed the publication of ‘The Essex Record Office in 70 documents’ as a means of raising the ERO’s profile at this time of uncertainty.

This was a joyous celebration of a remarkable building which we in Essex are very fortunate indeed to have to house our archives and those who care for them on our behalf.

## Sources:

Wiffen, N. (ed.) 2025 ‘The Essex Record Office in 70 Documents’. Chelmsford: The Friends of Historic Essex (ISBN 978-0-9502100-4-9).



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## Dates for your Diary

### Thursday 23rd July : Cressing Heritage Fair

Following last year's successful event, ECC Place Services have organised a follow up event in July. As well as a wide range of other heritage societies, both ESAH and EIAG have stands at the event. *Please come and say hello!* Loads of parking, and excellent refreshments available at Cressing. More details in due course.

**Sunday 13 September:** EIAG and the Silver End Heritage Society are planning a **Heritage Open Day** in Silver End as part of the commemorations of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the build start of the company village. Various societies and speakers will be involved. More details in due course.

### Saturday 3rd October: Essex Archaeology Conference 4. Essex Record Office. 09.00 – 17.10

Essex has a proud tradition, perhaps unequalled in Britain, of staging regular conferences giving updates on the County's archaeology and history. Following conferences in Clacton (1978), Writtle (1993), ERO - Chelmsford (2008), ECC Place Services, Essex Record Office and ESAH have organised conference number 4, to be held again at Essex Record Office. It is a day packed with interesting talks on a wide variety of topics. £40 for the day.

Booking via: [placeservices.co.uk/conservation-courses](http://placeservices.co.uk/conservation-courses)

## ESAH Events for 2026

Dear members, it's still early in the season, and only two events are booked so far. More will be notified in due course.

### Wednesday 6th May – Mistley tour: 2.00pm to 4.30 pm.

An introductory talk at Mistley Towers will be followed by a short walk to the Quay, and then to the nearby Swan Fountain (part of Richard Rigby's grand plan to make a spa at Mistley which never materialised). Across the road and over The Green we shall reach a good viewpoint to look up towards where Mistley Hall stood, the seat of the Rigby family. Finishing with tea and cake! Some walking is involved, and there are four fairly steep steps up into each of the Mistley Towers.

Parking at the Mistley Church Hall in New Road, CO11 1ER, and also in the slip road by the War Memorial. The War Memorial is opposite Mistley Towers at the entrance to New Road and the Church Hall is a little further up New Road before St Mary and St Michael's Church.

### Saturday 6th June – AGM at Ingatestone Hall: 2pm

By invitation of our Patron Lord Petre, we will be holding this year's AGM at Ingatestone Hall. The formal meeting will be at 2pm, and will be followed by a tour and refreshments. More details later.

**BOOKING:** Howard will be sending out a booking form in due course, but feel free to email Howard with an expression of interest in these events. Other details to be sorted later.

**The visits on the Society's programme are open to members and associate members only. Non-members attending may not be covered by insurance. 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.**

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## 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

### Names and Addresses

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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 the to 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

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## 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.