

# Essex Archaeology and History News



**Spring 2005**

# THE ESSEX SOCIETY FOR ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

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**COPY FOR THE NEXT ISSUE SHOULD BE SENT TO THE EDITOR AT THE  
ABOVE ADDRESS NO LATER THAN 30 JUNE 2005**

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

Cover illustration:

A Roman charioteer. Reproduced by kind permission of the artist Peter Froste.

See the article on Colchester Archaeological Trust on pages 8 to 10 for a report on the Trust's excavation of the Roman circus as well as their other recent excavations.

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

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It has been an especially busy and important time for many aspects of archaeological and historical services in Essex. The negotiations between Essex County Council and the District Councils on the funding of archaeological planning appear to have proceeded generally satisfactorily. We should also be optimistic that a new agreement between the County Council and the University of Essex concerning the continuation of the Victoria County History, albeit at a lower funding level, should be agreed in the next few weeks. Work at the Essex Record Office has started towards the re-organising of its ground floor spaces to attract more users and supporting income, and the outreach service has also been expanding its activity. Fuller reports on these issues will appear in future newsletters. In March the *Time Team* programme on St. Osyth was televised, and if you missed it then some details have been made available on the Channel 4 website: [www.channel4.com/history/timeteam/2005\\_osy.html](http://www.channel4.com/history/timeteam/2005_osy.html). It is normal practice for a full archive on the work behind these programmes to be deposited locally, and that will no doubt reveal much else of interest. Two *Time Team* 'specials' have also been made, but not yet broadcast, based around post-excitation work on the high status A/S burial at Prittlewell (Editors note: the Prittlewell programme is provisionally scheduled to be broadcast on June 20 at 9pm) and the 'chariot-racing track' recently excavated on the Abbeyfield site at Colchester Garrison (see the report on page 8 of this newsletter).

Since our last newsletter was published many members of the Society will have learnt with sadness of the death of

Herbert Hope Lockwood (1917-2004) or 'Bert' Lockwood as he was known affectionately to all. Bert was educated at Ilford County High School and King's College, London University, and returned to Ilford in 1952 as a lecturer at Tottenham College of Technology. He became a significant contributor to the Essex local history scene and published a great many fascinating and scholarly historical works, most of them concerned with Barking, Ilford and that neighbourhood. He also made major contributions to the running of historical societies and activities. Locally he served as Chairman and President of both Barking and District Historical Society and the Ilford and District Historical Society. Within the wider county he served with distinction as Chairman and President of the Essex Archaeological and Historical Congress and as a committee member of the Friends of Historic Essex. His funeral at Barking parish church in November 2004 was attended by a great many from the historical community in Essex and he is sorely missed.

Two of our Vice-Presidents have recently decided to step down from responsibilities they have ably covered for the Society for many years. One of our most distinguished members, Ray Powell has decided to retire as a holding trustee, a position he has held since 1990. He has, of course, also been a long-serving member of Council, as well as our President (1987-90) and Membership Secretary (1990-93). Along with John Appleby he was the prime mover in developing the Society's Publications Development Fund which has proved so important in underpinning and securing the future of the Society's publication programme. Ray has also been the most prolific and important contributor to our journal *Essex*

*Archaeology and History* in recent years, both through his own meticulous work on Essex history and through the editing of J.H. Round's important unpublished papers. At the same time I must mention William (Bill) Hewitt who Ray persuaded to take on the position of secretary to the Publications Development Fund when it was launched in 1993. Bill has been a stalwart and most effective administrator for the fund ever since, forever chasing donations and especially being bad news for the taxman. Now that he is stepping down we must put on record the Society's thanks for his amazing development of the fund, now called the Publications and Research Fund, which has currently received donations totalling £33,575.90, and which provides income of nearly £2000 yearly for the support of our publications. Like Ray, we will miss Bill's helpful contributions to many of the Society's managerial committees.

In connection with our publications, members will be relieved to know that progress is starting to be made towards the production of *Essex Archaeology and History*. Great efforts have been made to recover the time previously lost by largely unavoidable delays, and we owe a special thanks to Owen Bedwin for his work on this matter, assisted by Andrew Phillips. As I write, Volume 34 (2003) has been printed and bound is starting to go out for delivery. As in past years, officers of the Society will be attempting to deliver as many copies as possible by hand, as the postage cost can be exorbitant for these volumes. Largely due to Owen's dedication Volume 35 (2004) is also now quite advanced and we hope that it may also be produced during the current year or soon afterwards. However, probably the most important question facing the Society at the moment is the

identification of someone willing to fill the role of Honorary Editor of our journal.

Additionally, work on an index for volumes 1-30 of the journal has now got under way and our indexer, Peter Gunn, has already made substantial progress. When the index is finished it is Council's intention, finances and grants permitting, to provide it as an additional, and very useful, free volume for members. The first in our series of occasional papers by John Hunter on *Field Systems in Essex*, has also proved an outstanding success and has sold widely, both within the county and more generally. This is not surprising as it received very good notices, one in the *Agricultural History Review* describing it as a 'splendid illustration of the possibilities and potential worth of this type of research'. That first occasional paper has now broken even and all future sales (and we still have plenty of copies left) will provide a reserve of money towards the publication of future numbers in the series.

Finally, I would like to thank the Society's members for electing me to serve as their President for the past three years. It has meant a lot to an Essex 'boy' to have served the Society in this way. I also wish to sincerely thank all the Chairmen, Secretaries and members of the Society's various committees who have helped me a very great deal and whose dedication never ceases to astonish me. While I will be taking more of a back seat from June this year, I still expect to see many of you on a regular basis in several continuing roles on Society committees. But I must reserve my warmest thanks for our Hon. Secretary, Michael Leach, who is as an efficient, energetic and charming a Secretary as any President could wish for. In my case he has kindly shouldered

much Society work that I have been unable to cope with as other pressures have mounted up on my time over the past eighteen months. I retire wishing all our members a happy time in the future - excavating, researching, writing and reading about Essex archaeology and history.

Chris Thornton

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## **ESSEX PLACE-NAMES PROJECT SEMINAR**

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The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Seminar will be held in Saffron Walden on Saturday afternoon 12<sup>th</sup> November 2005. The Guest Speaker will be Dr. S. Oosthuizen, Ph.D. of Cambridge University. Her subject will be "Place-names, the end of Roman Britain and the Mercian kingdoms". The seminar will also include talks from local recorders.

Tickets, price £5, are available from the Project Coordinator, 27 Tor Bryan, Ingatestone, CM4 9JZ. Please make cheques payable to the Essex Society for Archaeology and History and enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope.

James Kemble

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## **URGENTLY WANTED – AN EDITOR FOR *ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY***

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Members will be aware of the delays in the issue of the Society's Transactions, *Essex Archaeology and History*. Volume 33 (for 2002) was issued in the summer of 2003 and it is hoped that, by the time they read this Newsletter, volume 34 (for 2003) will have reached members. The

latter has been produced with the generous and unstinting assistance of former editor Dr Owen Bedwin, assisted by members of the Publications Committee. Council is extremely grateful to them for their considerable efforts, without which volume 34 would not have materialised. Unfortunately the delays in publication have been unavoidable, as, in spite of appeals, the Society still lacks an Honorary Editor, well over a year after the resignation of the last holder of this post. It is particularly frustrating as there is no lack of archaeological articles to publish, the majority of which come with substantial grants to assist publication. The result of this subsidy is that the Transactions are of a much higher standard than the Society would be able to afford from the present level of membership subscription. There is already sufficient material for volume 35 (for 2004), but it will be difficult to publish this until we can find an Honorary Editor.

We are still seeking an enthusiastic person to head a small editorial team, and to be responsible for overall editorial policy. Prior experience is not essential, as he or she would receive as much support and advice as needed from the former editor, and from other members of the Publications Committee. Members have specialist knowledge in a wide range of fields (from prehistoric archaeology to C20 history), and are willing to vet submitted articles, and to see them through the proof stages. Though there are usually sufficient archaeological articles for each volume, we would like to publish more historical material and it would be helpful for the new editor to consider ways of achieving this in collaboration with the editorial team. Council's ultimate intention is to catch up with publication of the Transactions, so that each new volume will be issued in the year to which it

relates. This will be helped by the publication of an index for volumes 1 to 30, for which grants have been obtained. A professional indexer has started work on this and we hope to publish this as a separate volume (possibly with a small amount of historical or archaeological material) next year.

The Society's Transactions have been (and remain) a fundamental part of its function since its foundation in 1852. It is extremely important, both for the Society and for the history of the County, that we should find someone who can ensure that it will continue to be published regularly. Anyone who might be interested in this post can find out more by contacting me initially, by letter to 2 Landview Gardens, Ongar CM5 9EQ, or by phone on 01277 363106, or by e-mail at [family@leachies.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:family@leachies.freeserve.co.uk)

Michael Leach

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## **THE 1616 MAP OF LATTON, DRAWN BY JEREMIE BAILEY**

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Over the centuries, most parts of Essex generated an enormous wealth of historic records. Among those produced in the Harlow area was an exceptionally interesting map of the parish of Latton, drawn by one Jeremie Bailey in 1616 for the landowner, Sir Edward Altham, who died in 1632. Jeremie Bailey was apparently a husbandman of Great Bardfield, whose will was proved in 1625, though little else is known about him.

Harlow as it exists today covers the greater part of five contiguous ancient parishes: Harlow, Latton, Netteswell, Little Parndon and Great Parndon, from east to west. Each of them comprised a

narrow strip of land some three miles in length, stretching from the River Stort in the north to the ridge running east to west in the south from the present M11 roundabout to Rye Hill. Each had water capable of powering a mill and riverside meadows in the north with viable land, common pasture and woodland to the south. The map shows the second of these parishes, as it had developed by the early seventeenth century.

There were three manors - Mark Hall and Latton Hall within easy reach of St. Mary-at-Latton Church and Priory Manor, originally attached to Latton Priory in the south. In 1562, James Altham, a successful City of London ironmonger who had served as Sheriff, achieved the status of a landowner by the purchase of the first two of these. In 1567, he also acquired Priory Manor, which meant he owned the whole parish. It was his grandson, Sir Edward Altham, who died in 1632, who commissioned the survey which resulted in the drawing of the map.

It consists of three pieces of parchment measuring some 7ft. 6ins. in length, when placed end to end, approximately 2ft. wide. The map is in colour and provides an illustrated picture of Latton nearly 400 years ago.

Fore Street and Market Street, in effect the town centre of seventeenth century Harlow, are depicted beyond the Latton boundary, in Harlow parish, with all the houses shown, including the middle row, drawn as they would have appeared to a contemporary. Further south, all the houses in Potter Street are shown - again to the east of the Latton boundary.

Bush Fair appears with stalls set out, animals for sale and people going about their business. Some way off, a priest is

leading his parishioners, apparently singing the litany as they beat the parish bounds. The butts, the whipping post and Harlow potteries are marked.

The hill on which Harlow's Romano-British Temple was situated (although its existence had long been forgotten) is shown in the north and the former Latton Priory in the south. The church of St. Mary-at-Latton, Mark Hall and Latton Hall, Latton Vicarage and all the houses in the parish are quaintly pictured in their actual locations.

Around the Temple site, strip cultivation had survived but much of the rest of the parish, apart from common pasture, had been enclosed. Fields are named and many of the proprietors or tenants are indicated. Many of the field names are familiar, as they were used for new town housing areas, e.g. Broomfield, Great Plumtree, Stackfield and Orchard Croft. An immense amount of information has been incorporated into this map.

It was apparently passed down in the Altham family until 1778, when the last direct male heirs died without issue and another Altham descendant, William Lushington, purchased the estate. However, in 1786 he sold it to Montagu Burgoyne, a progressive in politics and agriculture, and a distant relative of General John Burgoyne who was forced to surrender to American rebels at Saratoga in 1782. In 1819, Burgoyne sold the estate and presumably the archives, including the map, to Richard Arkwright, son of Sir Richard Arkwright, inventor of the water frame, which was crucial to the development of a factory-based cotton spinning industry in Britain.

Richard Arkwright, who set up each of his six sons with a landed estate, purchased Mark Hall and the parish of

Latton for the eldest, the Revd. Joseph Arkwright. The latter's descendants retained and added greatly to it until obliged to sell it to the Harlow Development Corporation as the site for a designated new town in 1947.

Many of the archives passed to the Essex Record Office, but not the map, although the ERO was given the opportunity to photograph it. I managed to make contact with John Arkwright, head of the family, a year or two ago and found that he agreed that the map ought to return to the Harlow area. As a result, a deal was struck and I had the thrill of bringing this precious gem of Harlow's historic heritage back to its original home.

The British Library, whom I contacted, were very anxious to make a digital copy for their records, and provided me with two copies. One of these I had framed and presented to the Chairman of the District Council, Cllr. Ian Jackson, representing the town at a well-attended reception in Harlow Museum on 12th December, 2004. It now hangs in the Museum to illustrate part of the long and fascinating history of the town. The map itself needs to be kept out of the light if its life is to be prolonged, but it is at home here in Harlow as an original and splendid archive of Harlow's past and a tribute to the cartographical skills of its creator.

Stan Newens

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## **ESSEX IN RICHARD BLOME'S *BRITANNIA***

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Richard Blome (1635–1705) was an enterprising C17 publisher who has been treated rather contemptuously by historians as an unimaginative plagiarist.

His *Britannia* was printed in 1673 and was priced at 20 shillings. It is believed to have been the first work financed (wholly or partially, it is not clear) by obtaining the support of subscribers, a practice which was to be widely used in the C18. The coats of arms of 812 of his subscribers fill the first pages of his book. It is clear from his pre-publication prospectus that subscribers were invited to provide answers to a range of questions about their localities, ranging from the healthiness of the air to details of the local markets. Though Blome does not go so far as to admit his debt to William Camden's better known *Britannia*, he does underline his intention to update and add to Camden's work, and to provide better maps than those surveyed by Speed. He emphasised that he was the undertaker, not the author of the work which had received '*its birth from divers Manuscripts, from all Books yet extant that have writ of the same subject; and from some hundreds of experienced Persons ....who have freely contributed their assisting hands....*' This reasonable explanation did not prevent vicious criticism, such as that of Bishop William Nicholson who, in 1696, described it as '*a most notorious piece of theft out of Camden and Speed*'.

Blome indicated in his Preface that his book had been widely welcomed, as copies of Camden's *Britannia* were scarce and expensive, and unlikely to be reprinted. (William Camden first published his work in 1588 in Latin, and it was reprinted in an English translation by Philemon Holland in 1610 and 1637). Blome acknowledged that his maps (one of which was provided for each county) were not newly surveyed but were '*taken*' from those of Speed. They had been re-engraved, with some corrections, at a reduced scale in order to fit into the folio volume. He also

added, for each county, an alphabetical list of the nobility and gentry, apparently obtained from correspondence with his subscribers. He was aware that this could be a potential minefield, as deciding to which county a particular gentleman belonged could be difficult, and accidental omissions would inevitably cause offence. His Preface contains a careful anticipatory apology for any mistakes that he might have made. He ended his introduction with an invitation to readers to subscribe to his next work, a two volume '*Geographical Description of the four parts of the world*', at 20 shillings a volume. *Britannia* does not seem to have been a commercial success, as Blome sold the title, as well as many unbound offprints, to another publisher in 1677.

After a general introduction (including a very detailed description of the legal system, and a list of the current members of Parliament), each county was described in turn. Essex was covered in 4½ pages and was noted to be '*well clothed with wood*'. Its principal commodities were '*Cloths, Stuffs, Hopps, Butter, Cheese, Gun-powder, Cattle, Wood, Oysters and principally Saffron (the dearest Commodity that England produceth)*'. The coastal islands provided '*a great abundance of Fish and Fowl*'. He described the discovery of '*two Gyants teeth*' on the Ness north of Harwich, though noted that these were more likely to have been of elephant, rather than of human, origin. There was a brief but standard description of the county's 21 market towns, though that for Colchester was much fuller and had the flavour of an eye-witness account, possibly penned by a Royalist correspondent; '*twas once beautified with about 15 Parish Churches, many of which are now reduced to ruin, and not made use of; and here were several fair*



*structures, now much ruined, as are its Inhabitants much impoverished, by the disloyal party in the late deplorable times...'. Harwich was noted for its difficulty in obtaining fresh drinking water; and Maldon was (mistakenly) identified as the Roman Camulodunum, and Brentwood as Caesaromagus. Market day was almost invariably mentioned, with a qualifying comment about the market itself, often 'small' or 'indifferent'. The general impression is not one of affluence, with the exception of Saffron Walden where the crocus continued to provide considerable profits. In the appendix was a list of some 240 'Nobility and Gentry which are, or lately were, related unto the County of Essex'.*

Blome has been harshly treated by critics, but he was a publisher, not a historian, and he was perfectly honest in his preface about his sources and intentions. The support of over 800 subscribers suggests that his assessment of the scarcity of Camden's Britannia was correct, and that there was a good market for an updated equivalent. He was not the last to improve on Camden's work, though he may have been the least scholarly. Edmund Gibson, bishop of London, edited a new translation with substantial additions in 1695 and 1722, and there were other derivative works in the C18 in which the same mistakes (and even the same sentences!) can be recognised.

Michael Leach

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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Allan Lewis: *A Country Memoir* (2004) pp30 Pub: Lavers Local History Society, Watermans End Cottage, Matching Green, Harlow, Essex.

This delightful and honest account of rural Essex in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, full of loving memories of individuals and their families, is very reminiscent of that classic, *The History of Myddle*. Rich anecdotes of hardship and eccentricity, of lives lived almost on another planet, bring back a little corner of rural England where times were hard and lives were often bleak in the 1920s and 1930s. A second instalment is promised and recommended

Noel Beer: *The 19<sup>th</sup> Century Rectors of Rayleigh* (2004) pp 58 HTR Publications, 13 Nelson Road, Rayleigh.

This latest booklet from the fertile pen of Noel Beer keeps up the high standard of the earlier volumes: lucid, well-indexed and rooted in contemporary sources. It is worth reading solely for its analysis of the 1851 Census in Rayleigh – which has some very interesting findings, though of course, I will not say what they are: you must buy and read them for yourselves.

Peter Marcan, *South East England: History & Heritage Handbook* (2004), pp154, £35 (plus postage) from author at PO Box 3158, LONDON SE1 4RA.

This is an extraordinarily thorough A4 handbook, a companion to the author's *Greater London History & Heritage Handbook*, covering the 14 counties (including Essex) which ring London. It lists, with addresses, brief descriptions, websites and named officers, the widest possible range of organisations and individuals in the history and heritage fields, plus current and recent publications from public and commercial sources. History, archaeology, archives, family history, churches, gardens – it covers them all. Enlivened with small illustrations, this reviewer found it

extraordinarily sound for Essex, and one is only impressed at the trawling that must have gone on to compile it.

Tim Smith & Bob Carr: A Guide to the Industrial Archaeology of Hertfordshire and the Lea Valley (2004), pp 64, Association for Industrial Archaeology.

Nigel Balchin & Peter Filby: A Guide to the Industrial Archaeology of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough (2004), pp 52, Association for Industrial Archaeology.

These two colour-covered A5 booklets provide a detailed gazetteer of the areas they cover with chunky descriptions, map references, maps, illustrations and access details. Given their publishers, these must be presumed quite definitive for what they offer. They join our library as we wait for the volume covering Essex.

Andrew Phillips

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## COLCHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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The Trust's location of the Roman circus in Colchester has hit the headlines in recent weeks, but before a description of this spectacular discovery is given a survey of the range of other activities is appropriate.

Post-excavation work on the large quantity of material and information gained from the St. Mary's Hospital site relating to a Roman suburb just outside the town wall is in full swing. Nearby, inside the town wall, a plain tessellate pavement uncovered at the Sixth Form College on North Hill has indicated the site of a large town building, another addition to the plan of Roman

Colchester. (Editors note: see <http://www.catuk.org/excavations/bathhouse>)

The former ironmongers shop in East Street, known affectionately by Colcestrians as 'Charlie Brown's', has been converted to residential use. The refurbishment of the medieval building presented many features of exceptional interest to building historians. The Trust found evidence of occupation dating to the 12th or 13th centuries. A small excavation of a hearth produced more questions than answers, but one cannot strip a listed building to the sub-soil!

Lexden Road runs through the west Roman cemetery of Colchester and many of the burial remains in the Castle Museum, including the Facilis and Longinus tombstones, were uncovered by chance during the Victorian development in the area. Opportunities for a modern excavation are not common, but when Handford House in Beverley Road was demolished the Trust was able to dig the foundation trenches for the builders of the housing blocks which replaced it. This limited investigation of ten per cent of the complete area revealed 59 burials and two busta, rarely recognised cremations in which the cremated remains are left in a slot below the pyre. Thus, in spite of the nineteenth century disturbances the cemetery appears still appears to contain much to discover. Indeed, further burials have been found on isolated sites in the area recently.

Excavations at Stanway, adjacent to the site where the spectacular first century native British graves were investigated some ten years ago, has produced a modest number of humbler cremation burials with coin evidence pointing to the Vespasian period or later. Evidently the

area continued to be used as a cemetery, albeit in a small way, at some time after the richer earlier graves.

Excavations to test the archaeological potential in part of the St Botolph's area of the town near the South Gate, as a preliminary to a proposed urban renewal project, have exposed parts of the Roman and medieval defensive ditches in front of the town wall, and evidence of buildings dating from the first century onwards. Along the line of Osborne Street to the south of the wall trenches revealed refuse tips and Roman pits to the west, Roman clay floors, slots and post-holes to the east and, further east, water-logged medieval deposits from which well-preserved timbers and leatherwork were recovered. Osborne Street runs in the valley of a stream now piped.

Parts of the Colchester Garrison are being redeveloped and some of the land has been released for housing. The Trust has carried out a number of excavations in this area to the south of the town, which would have been part of the pre-Roman oppidum within the town's dyke system, and has established a pattern of first century Iron Age fields and tracks with a later farmstead or villa. Nowadays we think of north Essex as primarily arable land, but the features suggest stock management with fences and gates; a system of mixed farming, perhaps. To the north, towards the town, evidence of a first century BC enclosure and roundhouse demonstrates earlier occupation. Inevitably, pre-Roman and Roman burials have been found. Investigation continues as a watching brief.

Excavation yet further to the north at the site of the old cavalry barracks has revealed more Roman burials and a

metalled road. Some of the attractive Victorian buildings including a stable block will be preserved.

To the east of the cavalry barracks the most northern area of Abbeyfield has provided the biggest surprise. Four years ago a service trench dug for electricity cables revealed traces of wall foundation and two years later further traces turned up in test trenches prior to proposed development. In 2004 two planned excavations uncovered longer lengths, one with buttresses to the north and the other more southerly one with buttresses to the south. The latter site also produced ring ditches enclosing cremation urns of late Roman date, suggesting that they were the remains of barrows, not common in this period.

If the lengths of foundation were part of the same structure, it was a large one. Just how large was not appreciated until later in 2004 when stripping of topsoil to the west long the line indicated by the southern excavation exposed a 75 metre length of the foundations of two parallel walls nearly five metres apart, one being lesser than the other.

Plotting all the excavations together suggests an elongated double-walled structure at least 350 metres long and 74 metres wide, with a lesser wall on the inside and a buttressed wall on the outside. Comparison with known similar structures in the Roman Empire indicated that it was a circus, a stadium for chariot racing as in 'Ben Hur'. The double wall, low on the inside and high on the outside, would have supported a tier of seating facing inwards on to the elongated continuous racetrack with a central dividing spine. One of the entrances leading in beneath the seating has been located. An estimate based on the dimensions of the tiers indicates that

the circus may have held 8000 spectators.

The track would have been similar to a modern greyhound stadium with sharp turns at both ends requiring great skills from the drivers to avoid the spills and thrills which were part of the enjoyment for the watching crowd. At one end, there will have been twelve starting gates, one for each chariot team; the limiting extent of the excavations has not allowed which end has the gates to be determined yet. Indeed, the ends themselves have yet to be determined, although the foundation at the westernmost part of the main excavation does seem to be starting to curve northwards.

The number of known circus sites approaches two hundred, the majority in the countries surrounding the Mediterranean with Rome itself having several. Colchester is the first found in Britain and now replaces Trier as the northernmost.

And those late Roman barrows? Saxon barrows, such as at Sutton Hoo, are known. Perhaps they were the graves of Germanic contestants who came to grief on the circus bends!

The excavations carried out by the Trust are part of a project managed by RPS Planning, Transport and Design on behalf of the developers, Taylor Woodrow. The latter, who are funding the work, have expressed their pleasure in the discoveries and have stated that they will endeavour to preserve the remains for future generations. The investigations are still in progress and deliberations on what is to be done are in an early if not premature stage. In the meantime, after a series of arranged viewings the foundations will be buried

again to protect them from the weather until arrangements are made to display the site.

Formal reports are obviously some way off, but, published with commendable speed, issue No 18 of The Colchester Archaeologist, £2.95 from the Trust, contains much illustrated and interesting information about the excavations and circuses in general.

James Fawn

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## **NEWS FROM THE ESSEX ARCHIVE USERS FORUM**

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The Essex Archive users Forum, made up of representatives of the major organisations concerned with history in Essex, continues to represent to Essex County Council (ECC) the views and interests of those who use and value the Essex Record Office (ERO).

At a meeting with County Councillor Jeremy Lucas (Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Heritage and Culture) and officers of the Council on 1 November 2004, up-to-date reports were given on a number of ongoing issues for the ERO.

The review continues of the service that the ERO offers to those London boroughs which were formerly in the administrative county of Essex. Researchers with interests in these boroughs will know that ERO still holds and makes accessible in Chelmsford many records for the area, a historical legacy of the days before local government reorganisation. Discussions have been taking place with neighbouring authorities to look at options for the future, including the transfer of local records to the

appropriate borough, which might well provide a better and more accessible service for local people. It would also, undoubtedly, as I pointed out in my last report, help to resolve what ECC sees as an anomaly, with Essex funding being used to support the history of areas now outside its control and remit.

The Forum has voiced a number of concerns, particularly about the need to ensure that, if they are moved, the archives in question are looked after in proper conditions and with proper supervision. There is concern that the cardinal principle of not splitting archive collections, which straddle different localities, should continue to be respected. We have also pointed out that, while people in the boroughs themselves would certainly enjoy more local access than hitherto, it is also true that those whose research covers many different places and collections would, in fact, be inconvenienced by having to travel to a number of different archives or libraries.

We have been reassured by ECC officers that a consultation phase for users and other interested parties will take place, though it is now likely to be next year before this can happen.

Another piece of thinking currently under way is over the future of archive service-points in libraries, of which the one established at Saffron Walden is very much a pilot. One question being addressed is whether the opportunities offered by the availability of digital images of documents (in which ERO is investing substantially) might provide a means in the future of using the terminals now in all libraries to reach far more local communities than the archive service-point model. Thinking continues on this one.

Similarly ECC is continuing to look at ways of making better and wider use of the ground floor meeting rooms in the Record Office building at Wharf Road.

The Forum members were delighted to hear of the success of a range of events arranged by ERO staff as their contribution to the national Archive Awareness Campaign. So good was the response that ERO is now looking to arrange a programme of similar events stretching throughout the year, surely a good way of bringing new people to Wharf Road and introducing them to the possibilities that they can explore there.

Since the meeting of the Forum in July 2004, the feared cut in the funding provided by ECC to the Essex Victoria County History (VCH) has been confirmed. Almost £50,000 will be taken away, something like half of the previous annual contribution. The Forum members, and the societies that they represent, remain deeply concerned, not only over the future of what has, in many ways, been the spine upon which historical research has been supported, but over the future prospects for individual VCH team members who have worked so diligently to provide an authoritative and detailed history of Essex. It must be hoped that, wherever the root cause lies for this and other cuts in heritage budgets, it is not with the will of the members of ECC to support local initiatives which will help all of us in the county to respect and understand the county's historical legacy, so widely under threat at the moment. Concerned as it is over the proposals for massive new housing development in the county, ECC should perhaps reflect on the contribution which all its 'heritage services', and all the local initiatives which it has previously supported in one

way or another, make to the defence of what everyone – virtually without exception – in the county values; the quality of the present and future environment of Essex.

I would urge members and individuals with views on any or all of these subjects which they would wish to bring to the attention of ECC to write to Cllr Kay Twitchen, cabinet Member for Environment, Heritage and Culture, or to contact the convenor of the Forum Maureen Scollan, 22 Abercorn Way, Witham CM8 2UF ([mjscollan@macace.net](mailto:mjscollan@macace.net)). The senior members of ECC need to be reminded and/or persuaded that people feel strongly on these issues. Silence is, inevitably, read as acquiescence. Every voice and every opinion can make a contribution.

Vic Gray  
(Chairman, Essex Archive Users Forum)

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## **PROPOSED CHANGES AT AUDLEY END**

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Pressure to become less dependant on public funds, and to exploit new forms of income, can have a perverse effect on our heritage. Recent proposals at Audley End, (described by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings as ‘one of England’s finest Jacobean houses’) illustrate this point. This mansion is in the custody of English Heritage who has been under pressure from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to ‘exploit new commercial revenue streams’. A direct result of this was a planning application for hospitality marquees (one for up to 56 days a year, abutting the spectacular rear elevation of the house, and large enough to house 550 guests), as well as for new car

parking. The new car park was to be sited north of the walled garden (on land at present in agricultural use), and would involve widening the busy B 1383 road, rebuilding the boundary wall and installing new lighting, signs and weatherproof paths. While there are undoubtedly pressures on the present car park (which is less than ideally sited immediately north of the mansion itself) the proposed new site would have intruded into open countryside, as well as requiring a new access on to the B1383 and all the clutter associated with modern car parks. Local objections, and perhaps second thoughts from English Heritage, led to the withdrawal of this planning application in the latter part of 2004. However the present priority given to funding sport means that the financial pressure on English Heritage will continue, and that there will be further difficult conflicts between the best interests of historic sites and the need to develop new ways of increasing the income from them.

Michael Leach

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## **THE COLLAPSE OF SILBURY HILL**

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A recent edition of *British Archaeology* addresses the problem of the collapse of Silbury Hill in Wiltshire. While Essex can have no territorial claims, the fate of this World Heritage site (the largest prehistoric man-made mound in Europe) will be of concern to anyone interested in archaeology.

In May 2000, after heavy rain, subsidence left a large crater on the summit of the hill. The hole was packed with a temporary light-weight fill of polystyrene blocks, but it seemed possible that known, and unknown, voids

within the hill could cause further subsidence, or threaten the stability of the entire hill. In order to assess the risks, seven boreholes were drilled from the summit in 2001 and 2003, and analysis of the cores has provided much new information, as well as confirming earlier findings.

In summary, the hill was built in three, or possibly four, separate phases. The first phase was a small mound of chalk and soil, about 0.6m high. This was built up to about 2.5m with a mixture of soil and turf, mixed with plants and bushes, and then capped with several sharply defined layers of soil and chalk which raised the mound to about 5m in height. The second phase, constructed of crushed chalk, considerably increased its size, and raised the summit to about 20m. In the third phase, the mound was surmounted by a complex of concentric and radial chalk walls, forming a series of cells which were later packed with chalk rubble. The spiral path running up the hill may date from the original construction, or from subsequent usage. The final hill was not a pure cone, but was formed of seven straight-sided segments. No reliable dating evidence is yet available for any of these construction phases, as the earlier radio-carbon dates are now regarded as unreliable.

One of the remarkable features of Silbury is the preservation of the organic material sealed in the phase I construction. A wide range of identifiable plant material has survived, showing that the area was mature chalk grassland at the time of construction. Significant numbers of dung beetles confirm the presence of livestock, at a density equivalent to modern farming practice.

It is not clear whether the cellular construction of phase III is threatening the hill. There is no doubt, however, that the many subsequent human intrusions are major contributors to the present problem. In 1776, a pit was dug down from the top of the hill in search of artefacts, possibly reaching as deep as the summit of the buried phase II hill. Late C18 landscape tree planting round the summit has left visible scars and the roots may have caused underground damage. There were excavations at the base of the mound in 1867 and 1922, and a series of shafts were dug in the perimeter ditch in 1886. In 1849 a tunnel was dug from the bottom of the hill to its centre, and a substantial scar at the base on the SW side shows where the tunnel has collapsed. This tunnel was re-opened, and considerably widened and extended in a series of BBC-funded excavations in 1968-70. Unfortunately this last excavation was never fully written-up due to the death of the director. The roof of the new tunnel, large enough to take a dumper truck, was shored up with wooden planking resting on semi-circular steel arches. Pictures obtained by cameras through the recent boreholes show that the timber has rotted, resulting in substantial collapse of the tunnel roof.

It is clear that, without some form of consolidation, there is a high likelihood of further collapse and subsidence. Apart from the preservation of the hill itself, there are two other priorities; firstly, to preserve and to protect from oxidation the remarkable collection of plant and animal material sealed in the phase I mound; and secondly to re-interpret the evidence exposed by the 1968-70 tunnel and to remedy the failure to produce a proper archaeological report at that time. One possible option is the simple expedient of pumping chalk slurry into

the sealed tunnels, though there is no guarantee that all the voids would be filled and there would be no opportunity to re-evaluate the archaeology. These disadvantages would be obviated by a plan to reopen the tunnels, clear the debris and re-excavate, and finally to re-fill with properly compacted material. Cost, and the risk of precipitating further collapses, would be disadvantages. A further, even more expensive, solution would be to reline and support the tunnel with something more durable than steel and timber, thereby providing future archaeologists with ready access for further investigation. The polystyrene infill of the crater on the summit will not be replaced with chalk until the re-stabilisation of the collapsing tunnels has been completed.

This is a timely reminder of the potentially damaging nature of archaeological excavations, and the need to consider the long-term consequences of any invasive investigation. It also illustrates the not-infrequent loss of knowledge due to the failure to produce a full written account after the completion of an excavation, resulting in pressure to undertake further destructive intrusions. For this reason, English Heritage at Bristol (contact Amanda Chadburn on 011 7975 0700) is very keen to hear from anyone who was involved in the 1968-70 dig. Further information about Silbury Hill can be found in *British Archaeology* issue 80, or on [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

Michael Leach

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## A RIVENHALL PUZZLE – LARGELY EXPLAINED

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William Hatsell, who was rector of Rivenhall from 1734 till his death in

1772, came to the parish from Mitcham, Surrey with his wife (whom he had married about 1720) and five, or perhaps six, children. Hatsell's neighbouring clergyman at Faulkbourne (from 1746 to 1798) was the Reverend John Harrison whose brother, Thomas Harrison, was rector of Ashendon, Buckinghamshire. It is curious that there are three entries in the Rivenhall registers for this Thomas Harrison – the baptism of his son Isaac on 4 February 1746, the burial of his wife Margaret on 13 March 1750, and the burial of another son, Thomas, on 25 January 1753.

"Why are these Harrisons in our churchyard?" I have often asked myself. Outside the church near the east end is a brick vault shaped like a World War II Anderson shelter. A flight of steps now covered by stone slabs and earth leads down to the entrance. I was told in 1966 that, since the tomb had been an empty one, it had been chosen during the war as a safe place to store the precious C12 glass from the east window. This saved it from the damage to the church caused by a German parachute mine.

During the archaeological work in the 1970s, Dr Warwick Rodwell decided to take an auger to the brick floor of the vault to examine the underlying earth (Roman villa remains are very close nearby). He set my son to trowel out the earth deposit on the tomb floor where he soon found some signs of human burial. The work stopped while I had some discussions with our church authorities. Meanwhile excavation on top of the vault unearthed a fragmented tombstone, probably the earliest in the churchyard. The remaining part of the inscription read ".....Margaret Harrison.....They wait in hopes of a joyful resurrection."



Whoever built the vault was someone with money, such as the Western's of Rivenhall Place. They, however, already owned a large vault inside the church which, at that date, still had vacant spaces. The only other likely family were the Hatsell's. William was the son of Sir Henry Hatsell (a judge, 1641-1714) and was a man of influence, and it seems probable that Margaret Harrison was his daughter. Either Hatsell or Thomas Harrison must have paid for the construction of the vault.

Information on Hatsell's children is incomplete. The oldest of his known children mentioned in his will would appear to be Judith, born about 1722, who married at Rivenhall in 1751. Her husband was George Shephard, rector of Markshall, Essex. She was buried at Rivenhall in 1811 and her memorial is in the church. Her brother, Thomas, born in 1726/7, was a Cambridge graduate and was serving as his father's curate in 1754. He died in 1763, before his father, and, naturally, is not mentioned in his will. Three other offspring, however, are named, including James (born about 1729) who was employee in the bank of England and was buried at Rivenhall in 1781, aged 51. His sisters, Mary and Sarah, are the other named offspring. I do not know when they were born but it is likely that they and their siblings were born at Mitcham where William Hatsell was vicar before coming to Rivenhall.

This leaves us with a spread of five children born between 1720 and 1735, and a strong probability that there was a sixth – Margaret, who married Thomas Harrison, died in 1750 and was buried in the Rivenhall vault.

David Nash  
(Rector of Rivenhall 1966-1983)

#### Sources:

Some Additions to Newcourt's Repertorium  
Burke's *Landed Gentry* (1937)  
Rivenhall parish registers at ERO  
Rodwell W J & K A, Rivenhall:  
*Investigations of a Villa, Church & Village* vol ii CBA 80 (1993)  
*Dictionary of National Biography*  
Oxford and Cambridge Alumni  
Will of William Hatsell (proved January 1773)

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## THE PUBLIC CATALOGUE FOUNDATION IN ESSEX

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The Public Catalogue Foundation was launched at the National Gallery in 2003. A registered charity, it was set up by Dr Fred Hohler with three purposes: to make a complete record of the nation's oil paintings in public ownership, to make this accessible through a series of county catalogues, which will eventually be put on a free website, and lastly, to raise funds through catalogue sales for conservation and exhibition of rarely seen works of art. (The collections in each county will receive 500 free catalogues on a pro rata basis for this purpose.) Dr Charles Saumarez Smith, Director of the National Galleries is one of the Trustees, and Dr Alan Borg, Director of the Victoria & Albert Museum until 2002, is on the Advisory Panel. Two catalogues have already been published: Kent and West Yorkshire (Leeds).

The idea came to Fred Hohler after a visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. In the shop there he asked if he could buy a copy of their catalogue and discovered that they did not have one available for sale. "I clapped my hands and turned round to the queue behind me – there must have been 30 or 40 people in the shop – and asked if

they would buy a catalogue if one were available.” It turned out that about half of them would.

The process begins with the identification of the pictures. This means scouring museums, galleries, civic buildings, hospitals, fire stations, even crematoria for oil paintings in public ownership. The consent of the person in charge must be given and if unavailable, a catalogue drawn up. The pictures are then photographed (nine per page) and the catalogue printed. Despite staff shortages, the guardians of the public collections have so far welcomed the PCF and through their help, we have been able to find and photograph pictures that are not normally accessible to the public. Funding has been forthcoming from the DCMS, local authorities and organisations as well as a number of generous private individuals.

Every picture will be included irrespective of condition or perceived quality and we want to include as much as possible. Paintings in stores and stacks will also be photographed. The benefits to the galleries and collections are considerable *and at no cost to themselves*. In return for providing us with some simple information about the pictures (artist, title, size, dates), collections must allow our professional photographers in. They will be given the copyright of all the digital photographs, which they can then use for any purpose they choose, e.g. insurance, Christmas cards and postcards, on their websites and in education and research programmes.

Dr Hohler has asked me to be the Catalogue County Coordinator for Essex and I am very excited to be involved in such a worthwhile project. I have lived

in Essex for ten years, have a degree in History of Art and I am Vice-Chairman of the Friends of Essex Churches. I have worked for the Landmark Trust for eighteen years and I write a quarterly article for *Historic House*, the magazine of the Historic Houses Association. At present, the idea is to publish the Essex PCF catalogue next year. Happily this will coincide with the appearance of the new edition of the Essex Pevsner; both publications will show what riches may be found in this county and will be a boost to the initiative for rebranding Essex as a cultural centre. Please contact me if you can help identify little-known collections, or if you are a curator/administrator and would like to participate. Our website is at [www.thepcf.org.uk](http://www.thepcf.org.uk)

Julia Abel Smith  
01245 361525 [jasleighs@aol.com](mailto:jasleighs@aol.com)

If you are interested in helping fund the Essex catalogue or know of an organisation which might, please contact Andrew Ellis, Chief Executive on 020 7932 8408

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## FOR SALE

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Substantial wooden Victorian gothic chair, with large pierced finials, provenance unknown but possibly an ecclesiastical throne, 57” high, 28” wide and 26” deep. Needs some restoration. Not suitable for the faint-hearted, or for those living in a small house! Photos can be supplied to anyone interested in making an offer. Proceeds will be donated to ESAH. Please contact Michael Leach on 01277 363106 or [family@leachies.freemove.co.uk](mailto:family@leachies.freemove.co.uk)

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**APPEAL FOR THE PUBLICATION AND RESEARCH FUND (PRF)**

This fund replaces the Publications Development Fund. (see page 14) It will support publication of articles in each Volume of *Essex Archaeology and History* as well as Occasional Papers. Donations are placed into an INALIENABLE account, which cannot be spent. It is the Interest thereon which is distributed by awards granted by our COUNCIL. As at April 2005 the projected value of the fund stands at £33,575.90

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

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

Michael Leach

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